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Slovakia in the Struggle for Liberalization and Federalization of Czecho-Slovakia

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From the very beginning of the restoration of Czecho-Slovakia in 1945, Slovakia played, directly and indirectly, an important role in the internal policy of Czecho-Slovakia and in the fate of the Stalinist regime. Not only was this role more important than is generally recognized, but it was also of primary significance in the imposition of the communist system and, since 1962, in its liberalization.

Some western experts on Eastern Europe overlooked Slovakia's influence on the course of events in this "loyal" and "most faithful satellite", as the post-War II Czecho-Slovakia was called in the West.¹ From the communist take-over in 1948 to the liberalization and federalization process in 1967-68, they dealt extensively with the changes in Prague's internal and external policy, but their analysis of the elements of change involved was often biased, as Prof. S. Z. Pech recently pointed out:

Although Western specialists in Eastern European history have usually regarded it as their task to make the West familiar with the entire panorama of the polyglot region, they have in practice often been selective in the favours they bestowed on each nation. They have incorporated in their work, in modified form, the outlook and the prejudices of the nations which they "adopted". To give the most conspicuous examples, they viewed Slovak history through Czech eyes and Ukrainian history through Polish (or Russian) eyes. In so doing, they have in fact created a second-class status for certain nations. The history of the Slovaks in the West has usually been presented from the point of view of "Czechoslovakism" and has appeared as hardly more than a postscript to Czech history.²

It is the purpose of this survey to record and to discuss the overlooked elements and to assess the role which Slovakia and her communist elite played, first in imposing the communist system and then in forcing the Stalinist regime of Antonín Novotný to loosen the iron grip, and finally to step down and to free the way for the liberalization of the regime and the federalization of the state.

When Czecho-Slovakia was restored in 1945, an auto-

nomous status, with extensive powers for Slovak national organs—the Slovak National Council and the Board of Commissioners—was ensured for Slovakia. In the so-called “Košice programme” it was stated that “the Slovaks should be the masters in their Slovak land just as the Czechs in their Czech homeland” and that the government “will regard the Slovak National Council not only as the rightful representative of the individual Slovak nation, but also as bearer of sovereign right on Slovak territory”.³ Under the constitution of 1948, the National Council as well as the Board of Commissioners was given the powers of an autonomous government, so that Slovakia enjoyed “a special position in a system which was neither federal nor autonomous, but presented a peculiar form of ‘dualism’.”⁴

Rejected by a 70 per cent majority of the popular vote in the elections of 1946, the Slovak Communists changed, however, their attitude towards the political status of Slovakia. The defeat angered and surprised the Communist leadership and led them to abandon not only original idea of an independent Slovak Republic⁵ or a Slovak Soviet Republic⁶, but also the autonomous status of Slovakia within a federated Czecho-Slovakia.

After the coup d'état of 1948, the Communists eliminated not only the Slovak Democratic representatives from the National Council and all public offices, but Slovakia lost systematically what was left of her original autonomous status, which underwent several changes by the so-called Prague Agreements. And if the population, especially the Catholic majority, suffered between 1945-48 for not siding with the Communists, in the new situation they had to experience persecution not only for political reasons, but also for religious affiliation and non-proletarian background⁷ or resistance to socialization and collectivization.

The “people’s democracy” and all that it implied: “socialist patriotism”, looking at the Soviet Union as the “patria” of Slovak Communists, “socialist realism”⁸, and the “party spirit”, was introduced in Slovakia as in the rest of East Europe in an effort to transform Slovaks into a new type of “socialist” men, who “would be loyal to the existing regime, and obedient to its commands, and faithful also to the Soviet Union and world communism”.⁹ Life was supposed to be “directed in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism”

and the "scientific world outlook" and historical materialism were to replace religion and nationalism.

From 1948 on, this transformation was forced upon Slovaks through brute force by the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia which left to the Communist Party of Slovakia practically no influence in the Slovak affairs.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia "after 1947 subordinated the Slovaks to increasingly centralist rule from Prague, and trod underfoot the nationalist feelings even of Slovak Communists".¹⁰ Those who tried to defend "the gains of the Slovak uprising" or were suspected of such intentions, were, in 1950, removed from public life as "bourgeois nationalists", incarcerated (Husák, Novomeský, Okáli, Rašla, etc.) or hanged (Clementis, Žingor) and replaced by obedient persons of non-Slovak origin (Široký, Bacílek) in the Party as well as in the government.¹¹

At the same time in spite of the provisions of the Constitution of May 9, 1948, the legislative and executive powers of the Slovak National Council and of the Board of Commissioners were drastically reduced and both institutions became subordinated to the Prague government. The Board of Commissioners had first to "abide by the directives and instructions of the Cabinet" and later, in 1960, was completely abolished. The Slovak National Council could still legislate, but the Council's laws had to be signed by the Prime Minister, who could summon, adjourn and even dissolve the Council.

Since in the National Assembly and in the Prague government the Slovaks were in minority, there was nothing, not even a theoretical possibility to protect Slovakia against the rule of Prague, because the Constitution "failed to provide for any guarantee that would protect the Slovak minority against the Czech majority... As more than three-fifths of Czechoslovak legislators came from the Czech provinces, anything could be done with the status of Slovakia, even if all the Slovak representatives opposed it".¹²

Within a few years Czecho-Slovakia had become "a highly centralized state, and Slovak home rule reduced almost to nil. In the post-1956 climate, some gestures were made to broaden the authority of the Slovak bodies. Increasing emphasis was laid, however, on the necessity

of integrating Slovakia within a unified economy, and even the bare forms of Slovak autonomy were still the object of suspicion by the regime. The Constitution adopted in 1960 further weakened the position of Slovakia".¹³

It was, however, the general political atmosphere, the brutality of the police, the concentration and forced labour camps, the persecution for "deviation" or religious beliefs, which characterized this period, called alternatively "period of dogmatism", period of the "cult of personality" or period of "deformation" and "Stalinism".¹⁴

Denounced later by L. Novomeský as "monstrous and horrible", this period "wiped out trust, confidence, understanding, yes even loyalty in the life and consciousness of thousands and thousands of people".¹⁵

Slovak national feelings and pride were hurt in this period also by Prague's economic and cultural policy¹⁶ and by a transfer of some 400 to 500 thousand Slovaks to the Czech provinces from which the Sudeten Germans had been expelled and where the Slovaks became denationalized, being deprived of Slovak Schools and organizations. While the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, also numbering some 500,000 had schools of all categories, cultural organizations, newspapers and representation in the administration of the state, the Slovak minority in the Czech part of the country was destined for fast denationalization.

The economic measures of Novotný's government hurt Slovaks even more. Slovakia was industrialized mostly by old machinery, transferred from the Sudeten German areas, or large factories lacking raw materials in Slovakia, to serve rather Soviet and Czech, than Slovak needs. From 1960 on, industry was unable to compete or to meet required levels of production. As a result, Slovakia suffered by the lowering of standards, and Slovaks were hurt by the admonitions and reproaches of Prague, particularly after Novotný's regime had curtailed the power of the Slovak administrative organs and had concentrated the administration of Slovakia in Prague and in Czech hands.

Thus the years after the coup d'état present a story of drastic changes in forms and institutions as well as in their practical working. The actual situation was in flagrant contradiction with the promises of the Slovak Communist Party of the autonomous status proposed for

Slovakia. It is also a story of the mutual mistrust between the Czechs and Slovaks and the resulting clashes of which the outside world learned very little.

In their subservience to Moscow and in their desire to imitate, if not surpass, Stalin's methods and general policy, the Communist leaders in Prague went further than any other satellite.

"The system of terror was no less severe than in Albania, Hungary and Bulgaria, and in some respects went even further than these classic practitioners of this art".

"Even during the critical months of 1956, Czechoslovakia had remained a model of Stalinist orthodoxy and exhibited none of the "fever" which had infected other satellites, notably the closest neighbours north and south. From the Communist point of view, Czechoslovakia was a most faithful associate of the Soviet Union, showing no evidence of dangerous dissatisfaction or domestic instability, and giving her full support to the Moscow Gospel as interpreted by Krushchev".

"In fact in the year which followed the XXII Congress in October 1961, Czechoslovakia, unlike some of its neighbours, was hardly influenced at all by the new spirit of Moscow, and showed no signs of relaxing its strongly Stalinist course. Paradoxically, this country, almost unique in its devotion and subservience to Moscow, was increasingly out of step with Krushchev's policy of de-Stalinization. "Orthodoxy" seemed to involve into "heterodoxy"."¹⁷

With regard to Slovakia the Prague Government used their power "to sweep away from the history of Slovak culture an entire past", according to Novomeský, and brought "a terrible curse on the life of the country."¹⁸ This treatment of Slovakia could not, of course, influence the Slovaks for Czecho-Slovakia or Communism. On the contrary, even "the slight concessions of 1956-1958 were bound to leave the Slovaks unimpressed and could in no way detract from Slovak bitterness toward the treatment to which they had been exposed ever since the KSČ (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) leaders abandoned their calculative support of Slovak autonomism in 1946."¹⁹

This did not remain unnoticed by the Government and its press which deplored the "lack of confidence and the suspicion of fear" between the Czechs and the Slovaks, but laid blame on "the neglect of Leninist principles,"²⁰ and on Slovak "bourgeois nationalistic tendencies". These tendencies according to complaints made by the Slovak Party's First Secretary, Karel Bacílek, at the session of the Central Committee in January 1958, have penetrated

"various fields of our cultural, political and scientific life; sports; the state apparatus; economic organs; and so on".²¹

Slovaks could not be gained for the regime even by retrospective attacks on "Czecho-Slovakism", the concept that the Slovaks and the Czechs were ethnically, linguistically and culturally one nation, which had alienated the Slovaks to Masaryk's republic, and which Václav Kopecký, speaking on behalf of the KSČ's Czech hierarchy, called in 1958 "an imperialist conception of national oppression of the Slovaks."²²

Since the Slovaks felt even more oppressed, more humiliated and exploited under the Communist regime than by the "bourgeois" regimes of 1918-1938, such proclamations could not change the feelings of Slovaks and their attitude towards Prague. From 1948, and for a great part of Slovak population from 1946, Prague hurt even the pride of the Slovak Communists too deeply to be able to heal the wounds by condemning "Czechoslovakism" of the pre-War years. There was no comparison with the treatment which Slovaks received from Prague between the Wars and from the Communist rule after 1946. And Slovak nationalism,²³ which is a force rarely understood or interpreted properly by Western Scholars, was stronger after the War than at any time before, because the leftist elements also wanted Slovakia governed by Slovaks.²⁴

Already before the Second World War nationalism was a force among Slovaks "directed against any authority residing outside Slovakia".²⁵ The period of the Slovak republic (1939-1945) and the uprising of 1944 undoubtedly strengthened the aversion against any foreign domination of Slovakia. All the restrictions of the powers of Slovak national organs, the trials of the leaders of the uprising as "bourgeois nationalists" and harsh economic centralization by the Prague Communist regime could not but create strong feeling of oppression and compromised relations between the Czechs and Slovaks.

By 1958 the relations between the Czechs and Slovaks deteriorated to such a degree that even according to E. Táborský a close collaborator of Dr. E. Beneš,

"while such declaration as above might have flattered the Slovaks in 1945, they fell on deaf ears in 1958. Nor could the communist leaders derive much comfort from the "improvement" in the Slovak class

structure resulting from the communist industrialization and collectivization drive. By building up Slovakia's backwoods areas, the regime has unwittingly prodded the Slovaks' pride and self-confidence, and thus helped to underpin the same Slovak nationalism it has been trying so hard to blot out. Having acquired the know-how and the ability to run the system themselves, the Slovaks Communists and non-Communists alike—resent being ordered around by their elder Czech brethren."²⁶

This rule of party dictatorship and police terror is normally divided into two periods: in a period of strict Stalinist form of rule which in Czecho-Slovakia lasted until 1956 and a period of slow detachment from the Stalinist system, during which a lip service was paid to de-Stalinization, and lasted until 1963. There are many explanations as to why there was a lack of de-Stalinization in Czecho-Slovakia after the XXth and especially after the XXII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Krushchev's denunciation of Stalin and his rule. The Czech and Slovak press dealt from 1963 extensively with this problem and so did some foreign scholars.²⁷ There is, however, no unanimous explanation, as there is no unanimity in the designation of this period or in definitions of this particular labels, of which the label of "cult of personality" was used more generally than the others.²⁸

But there is no doubt that the first to attack the social and political aspects of this period and to call for changes were the Slovak Communist intellectuals. "Slovaks inspired by their memorable uprising of 1944 have taken the lead in the process of modernization of the regime, while the Czechs have, until recently, been more cautious or more lethargic."²⁹ * The attacks and criticism of Slovak intellectuals were directed mainly against Antonín Novotný who succeeded Klement Gottwald as Secretary General of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia in 1953, and Antonín Zápotocký as President of the Republic in 1957. For ten years his iron grip on the Party and on the State did not allow to modify the totalitarian Stalinist features of the regime, and during his rule by "brute force" were liquidated or imprisoned Slovak Communist leaders, accused of "bourgeois nationalism" and tried in 1954. According to Communist sources,³⁰ the period of the cult of personality ended in 1953, but due to Novotný's repressive methods, use of police terror, and his brutal struggle against Slovak bourgeois nationalism, the cult of personality in the view

of Slovak intellectuals existed from 1949 to 1962.³¹ Only in the spring of 1963 serious efforts at de-Stalinization marked the political life in Czecho-Slovakia.

Western specialists in Eastern Europe offered several answers to the question why the Stalinist regime survived for so many years, but their views do not seem to give a satisfactory explanation. The purge of the potential leader, Clementis, and the bogey of Slovak nationalism which hounded the Czech leadership of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, as it did the democratic leaders before the second World War, are only partial explanations. The brutal Soviet repression of the Hungarian revolution and the fear of Germany, which is greater among Czech than in any other nation of Central Europe, may be other explanations, but on the whole, these reasons cannot explain why a country with old democratic traditions, with western culture, with a previously high standard of living, praised in the whole world, did not follow the example of Poland and Hungary, except in smallscale disturbances of workers in Pilsen in 1953, the demonstration of Slovak students, which also spread to Prague,³² and the writers' protest of 1956.³³

Nor the fact that the West did not help the East European countries, including Czecho-Slovakia, by a more moderate course in East-West relations can be even less responsible for the Czech obstinacy to de-Stalinize. It was doubtful then—and today it is certain—that any co-operation in Europe between West and East going beyond what has been done, would have "strengthened the ability of the East European states to follow a more independent course".³⁴

The explanation that the Czech communist leaders "had long and open experience in politics prior to the accession to power and perhaps this fact accounts for their unity and their ability to survive"³⁵ and continue to hold the Stalinist grip on the country, is also only partially satisfactory. In the Slánsky's purge of 1952 were eliminated the representatives of a rigid Stalinism and not the revisionists, and as a result the new leaders could start a new course after Stalin's death, but they were apparently afraid to de-Stalinize without incriminating themselves.

We can find the answer to the question of Stalinism

in Czecho-Slovakia in the interplay of all these phenomena, but mainly in the fact, that "the completeness of Stalinist terror had brought about a situation where there was no one capable of giving leadership of a new anti-Stalinist course after 1956"³⁶ and in the "realism" and in the "Good Soldier Schweik's" mentality of the Czech ruling majority of the population. Except for the small scale disturbances of workers in Pilsen, who were irked by the economic difficulties rather than by political oppression, and the students' demonstration in Bratislava and Prague, there was no sign of dissatisfaction or open opposition among the Czech intellectuals or large masses.³⁷ As a result the leaders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party were in no mood to depart from the Stalinist position, and the Soviet repression of the Hungarian revolution rather strengthened their belief that it was not necessary to modify their regime.

The Czech and Slovak communist leaders "associated themselves with the Soviet verbal onslaught on Stalin, hoping, no doubt, that they might avoid necessity of taking genuine steps to modify their own Stalinism",³⁸ even later at the time of the clash between Moscow and Bucharest in 1961. The leaders of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia remained equally unnerved by the Sino-Soviet conflict and the idea of polycentricism. They saw in polycentricism a danger to internationalism of the Communist movement and considered the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as the "only center".³⁹

*Slovakia in the Struggle of de-Stalinization*⁴⁰

It is important to indicate at the outset, that after the execution of Clementis and the purges of 1954,⁴¹ the Communist leaders in Slovakia were handpicked by Prague, that they were neither intellectuals, nor theoreticians, and that some of them, like Široký and Bacilek were even lacking in Slovak background. They were the hard-line "apparatchiks" of the Gottwald school and as such, unable to take a new course or to take part in the de-Stalinization process. Furthermore, "unlike their Czech comrades, the Slovaks have had no right to determine the fundamental lines of Party policy and tactics, not even for Slovakia, or to adopt Party programs".⁴² After the "Stalinist democratic centralism" was imposed upon Slovakia in 1948, decentral-

ization was replaced by the "centralizing tendencies, justified officially as being necessary for the successful construction of socialism. This centralization continued throughout the whole Stalinist era and was carried over into post-Stalin days.⁴³

"The statutory inferiority of the Slovak Party organs was amply corroborated by actual developments".⁴⁴ In addition, the Communists were very weak in membership in Slovakia in comparison with Bohemia-Moravia. Of the 2,311,966 members and candidates of the KSČ in 1949 only 236,432 were from Slovakia, i. e. slightly over 10 percent, although more than one-quarter of Czecho-Slovakia's population lived in that area. Also, the Party's appeal to the youth was far less effective in Slovakia than in the rest of the country. While the over-all percentages of Party members below twenty-five years of age in 1949 was 14.5, the corresponding figure for Slovakia was only 9.7.⁴⁵

Notwithstanding all these factors, it was in Slovakia where the open struggle for de-Stalinization began in April 1963.⁴⁶ The interplay of political, psychological and economic reasons had made the Slovak communist intellectuals, mostly journalists and writers, bitter and they started to assail the Stalinist regime of Antonín Novotný on all three fronts: political, ideological and economic. The Slovaks were also irked by the fact that the resolutions of the XII Congress of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, held in December 1962 spoke of the rehabilitation of the Communists who were sentenced between 1949-1953, and disregarded the purges of Slovak "bourgeois nationalists", tried in 1954.

The first outburst of open opposition took place at the Congress of Slovak Writers, held on April 21-22 in Bratislava, and a month later at the Congress of Slovak Journalists, also in Bratislava, on May 27-28. While at the Congress of Slovak Writers, Karol Rosenbaum spoke of "inhuman methods" during the period of the "personality cult" and about forces sufficiently strong to prevent a return of the terror of that period,⁴⁷ at the Congress of Slovak Journalists, M. Hysko, professor at the Slovak school of journalism, led the attack against the slowness of de-Stalinization by Novotný's government. Despite Novotný's warnings and personal attacks on Hysko and R.

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Kaliský a month later, these two Congresses unleashed forces which put the life of the country on the tracks of de-Stalinization and liberalization.

There had been mounting dissatisfaction in Slovakia since the Congress of Slovak Writers in 1956 among the writers and journalists, who remained, after the imprisonment of the political leaders accused of "bourgeois nationalism", the only spokesmen for the Slovak people. In 1963 the spark for the open criticism of Novotný's regime and insistence on reforms was given by the return from jail of the "bourgeois nationalists". Their accounts⁴⁸ of brutality shook the conscience of Slovak writers and journalists, and they were shaken more than anyone else because some of them had contributed to the consideration of Husák and Novomeský, while others had praised the regime and its iron grip and were mute about brutality and persecution of innocent people in all walks of life. As Hysko said at the Congress of Slovak journalists, they also were partly guilty because they presented the innocent comrades as "criminals".⁴⁹ They now wanted to repair the damage done and from L. Mňačko, who became well-known abroad, to M. Hysko, V. Mihálik, V. Mináč, Kaliský and others, the intellectuals denounced the Stalinist regime and its brutality and asked for reforms.⁵⁰

The Congress of Slovak Writers and the Congress of Slovak Journalists became more than mere meetings to discuss literary and cultural problems. As we see it now and as it was considered by many in 1963, it was the beginning of a serious effort to change the ruling system, to clear the atmosphere of the suffocating fear of oppression and to correct injustices and crime of the period of the cult of personality. Slovak writers and journalists played again the role of the "conscience of the nation" which the Stalinist terror not only silenced for many years but had found in some writers eager collaborators.⁵¹ The editorials in *Kultúrny Život* before the Congress were entitled "Literature in the struggle for truth",⁵² and the participants proved that they meant to have it thus. After the Congresses furthermore, they asked for "a clean table" and stated that "everything is not in order".⁵³

Slovak writers spoke in the same fighting spirit against the terror and for a "cult of truth" instead of a cult of

personality also at the Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, held in Prague on May 22-24 of the same year. The words fear, falsification of facts, abuse of confidence were repeated time and again. Noteworthy were especially the outspoken speeches by the poets Vojtech Mihálik and Laco Novomeský, the dramatist Peter Karvaš and the courageous writer V. Mináč,⁵⁴ the essayist M. Chorvát, Zora Jesenská and others. The Congress "revealed that the mood of discontent was not confined to Slovak writers only, but included their Czech colleagues. Almost without exception, the participants were critical in the extreme, not only of the worst evils prevailing in the cult period, but also of their continuance right down to the present. Speaker after speaker gave vent to the general public outrage at the horrors of the cult and the failure of the party to eliminate them since 1956, and spoke in individual ethical terms which had little to do with party-mindedness. Truth and freedom were words frequently invoked".⁵⁵

The poet V. Mihálik spoke again about the duty of writers to be the "conscience of the nation" and bitterly criticized the period of the cult of personality.⁵⁶ L. Mňačko, whose series "Belated Reports", well known for their exposure of the terror and injustices, began to appear in *Kultúrny Život*, spoke of the "mousetrap" and the "unrosy economic, political and moral situation of the country".⁵⁷

L. Novomeský whose contribution to the discussion was published under the heading "With comrade reason" and the contributions by Zora Jesenská and P. Karvaš ("About one source of dogmatism")⁵⁸ completed the picture of dissatisfaction with the past and present, insisting on the necessity of change and reforms.

These congresses, as we now see launched Czechoslovakia upon a new course, with consequences unpredictable at that time. If until the early 1960's the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia could have served as a laboratory specimen of die hard dogmatism and appeared practically untouched by the winds of change stirring in the international Communist movement⁵⁹ after these meetings it was not true any longer.

The leaders of the Communist Party realized it and made some further steps in the direction of de-Stalinization

but without serious efforts to change the nature of their totalitarian system.

Novotný only reluctantly admitted that the cult of personality harmed the country and had such disastrous effects as claimed by the critics. He tried to put the blame on the purged Stalinist R. Slánský or argued that many changes had already been made to conform with the resolutions of the XII Congress of the Party. In an angry speech in Slovak town of Košice, on June 12, 1963, he rejected the accusations contained in the speeches of M. Hysko and Roman Kaliský, and categorically proclaimed that the Communist Party would not allow the Slovak newspaper *Pravda* to become "a tribune of attacks against the leadership of the Party".⁶⁰

Slovak Communist intellectuals, however, were not frightened by Novotný's threats and warnings. Throughout 1963 Novotný was subjected to vocal criticism for his failure to break the hold of Stalinism on national life, to rehabilitate publicly those who had suffered most in the era of repression, and to punish those who had borne the main burden of responsibility in that era. Most vehemently did the Slovak writers call for greater freedom in their national life, and for the erasing of the charges of "bourgeois nationalism" on which the purge of leading Slovak personalities had been based. They continued, especially in the organ of the Union of Slovak Writers, *Kultúrny Život*, to insist on the necessity of reforms and asked for a fair deal for Slovakia. In August they obtained full rehabilitation⁶¹ of the Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" whom the XII Congress of the Party in November 1962 had bypassed. In September, they scored another success in the removal of V. Široký⁶² from the Government as well as from his position in the Party and in the National Assembly.

These concessions did not satisfy, however, the awakened conscience of Slovak Communist intellectuals⁶³ and during the months to come they assailed the regime mercilessly, especially in *Kultúrny Život*. Novotný retaliated by forcing to resign in June 1964 the editor in chief of *Kultúrny Život*, Paul Števček, and Roman Kaliský, member of the editorial board, who had fearlessly attacked

a year before the economic policy of Novotný's regime in Slovakia.

Instead of frightening the intellectuals, these measures added new fuel to the fire of their dissatisfaction. Slovak writers, journalists and economists began to point out the deformations of "socialist legality and morality" and the acts of discrimination against Slovaks in all field of public life.

They asked for the revision of the Constitution of July 1960, which formally abolished the limited autonomy of Slovakia granted to Slovaks between 1945 and 1948. Furthermore, they asked for economic reforms,⁶⁴ for the re-definition of certain principles of socialist ideology,⁶⁵ for a new cultural policy⁶⁶ and for the revaluation of the role of the Slovak uprising,⁶⁷ which was ridiculed and degraded by Novotný's regime and some Czech writers during the imprisonment of the leaders of the uprising—Husák, Novomeský, Okáli and others.

The regime yielded in some fields, especially in cultural policy and new Minister, C. Císař, allowed a degree of liberalization and restored some autonomy to universities. The economists could also quite freely discuss their plans from August to November, 1963, and their criticism and proposals were published,⁶⁸ Novotný's position and Moscow's support for his regime seemed for some time to be in jeopardy. The struggle was, however, far from won. Novotný was re-elected not only as President of the Republic but, at the XIIIth Party Congress of 1966, also as First Secretary. And he was not only unable but also unwilling to proceed with basic reforms or to quiet down the antagonism between the Slovaks and Czechs which had erupted in 1963 and increased in intensity in the Slovak press and in Party meetings with every year.

In fact, Novotný fought against the unrest in the minds of Slovaks, and was reluctant to grant any significant concessions. Some Czechs realized, however, that the problem existed and should be solved.⁶⁹ Under fire by Slovaks, among whom the rehabilitated G. Husák and the Soviet educated Alexander Dubček gained more and more influence, by the "revisionists" and "pragmatists", all of whom tried to humanize and reform the Party and government, Novotný tried at last to give a new image to Czecho-Slova-

kia at home and especially in Western Europe. More personal freedom, including a limited religious freedom, was granted and some economic reforms were introduced. "Most important, the Communist Party, having largely abandoned its dogmatic positions, was no longer the all-seeing, all-powerful, unquestioned authority that it once had been."⁷⁰

Furthermore, the writers and journalists were soon joined in their opposition and outspoken criticism of the regime not only by the youth, which increasingly posed a serious problem to the government, but also by the workers and other segments of the population. People were no longer afraid to criticize and opposition was growing.

Novotný and his Party apparatus tried to control the winds of change, but it was a hopeless struggle. William Široký was replaced by the Moscow educated Jozef Lenárt, former Secretary General of the Slovak Communist Party, who was not involved in the purges as were Baš'ovanský and Bacílek.⁷¹ Novotný could not control these developments. Too many people suddenly realized that both a change of course and of people in leading functions was inevitable.

The struggle for liberalization and federalization

By 1967 the internal situation in the country and in the Party had matured to the point that it was possible to remove Novotný from his omnipotent position of First Secretary of the Party and on March 22, 1968 also from the Presidency of the country. The masterful co-operation of the factions which had called for reforms on both the Slovak and Czech side, resulted in the "impossible" becoming a fact, and Alexander Dubček, at the age of 47, assumed the office of the First Secretary and launched the country upon the course of liberalization which surprised the whole world.

While intellectuals in the Czech provinces centered their attention mostly on economic and ideological problems (the contribution by E. Löbl or E. Goldstücker, both from Slovakia, should not, however, be underestimated), in Slovakia political leaders and intellectuals were deeply involved in the problem of humanization of the system

and the restoration to Slovakia of at least a part of the autonomy which she had enjoyed before 1948. With the political rehabilitation of the "bourgeois nationalists" and the amnesty granted to the military leaders of the 1944 uprising, the status of Slovakia and the "gains of the uprising" were once again the goals to be achieved.⁷²

Early in 1968 Slovak communist intellectuals were for a while involved in a discussion as to whether priority should be given to liberalization or to federalization,⁷³ but the controversy ended with the consensus that one does not exclude the other and that both aims should be pursued. A certain reluctance on the side of the Czechs towards federalization,⁷⁴ nevertheless, led the Slovaks to put stress on the federalization. There also were still alive reminiscences on the "First Czechoslovak republic" when Slovakia suffered discrimination and exploitation in spite of the fact that the Prague governments were known as "the only true democracy in Central Europe between the Wars". Furthermore, the manner in which all the agreements and declarations guaranteeing an autonomous status for Slovakia after 1945 were forgotten and disregarded, forced the Slovak leaders to put the emphasis on the necessity of constitutional reforms.

In fact, Slovaks submitted a plan for a federalization of the Republic in 1963,⁷⁵ and Alexander Dubček, after assuming the leadership of the Party and starting the liberalization process, put the Slovak demands for an equal status with the Czechs high on the agenda of his reforms.⁷⁶ Federalization was in the eyes of Slovak communist leaders, who were attacking Novotný's regime since 1956, and without reserve since 1963, an essential part of the democratization process which, on the other hand, was the prerequisite for liberalization. Only by the transformation of the political structure of the state could Slovaks achieve a position of full equality and control of further development of the situation in the right direction.

The impression, created in the West by reports from Prague or by some Western analysts of the developments of the situations in Czecho-Slovakia, that the movement for giving communism "a human face" was an expression of the Czech "hussite traditions" and therefore a Czech and not a Slovak affair, is devoid of any serious foundation.

Alexander Dubček, the young Slovak leader of the liberalization movement who spent his formative years in the Soviet Union, hardly knew anything about the "hussite traditions" when he made his first major speech on February 1st, 1968 in which he promised "the development of socialist democracy" in the Party and the state. Nor did Edward Goldstücker, born and educated in Slovakia, who became elected the chairman of the Czechoslovak Writers Union and insisted that a way must be found how to reconcile individual freedom with the communist system, have any connection in his background with the "hussite traditions".⁷⁷

A group of Czech intellectuals, especially the youth of Prague, became undoubtedly more vociferous than Slovaks when the movement was launched.⁷⁸ It looked at times as if they had desired to make up for years of servile obedience to Novotný's regime. Czechs also were more provocative in their behaviour when the Soviet Union and her satellites condemned the movement after a meeting in Warsaw and as a result they contributed or gave more pretexts than the Slovaks to the final Soviet step which killed the liberalization movement. Objectively, both Slovaks and Czechs desired the changes. Slovaks more than Czechs because they suffered more—communists and non-communists alike—under the Novotný's regime. Slovaks therefore started the opposition and Slovakia gave to the struggle for the "human face of communism" not only the leader, Alexander Dubček, but also it became the place of two historic conferences: on July 1st at Čierna nad Tisou and on August 3rd, in Bratislava.⁷⁹

The liberalization process was largely publicized in the West. A survey of the Czech and Slovak press and of statements of the leaders of the movement would indicate, however, that the aims and goals of the liberalization were often magnified and misinterpreted by some Western analysts. To what extent such behaviour of the West contributed to the final decision of Moscow to go with the tanks against the wind of freedom, is of course a matter of conjecture.

Skilling correctly assessed the aims of this "interrupted revolution":

In some respects, the reforms planned in Prague were more modest than analogous efforts in other communist countries. There was not, at least at the outset, a rejection of Soviet domination, as in the case of Yugoslavia, and other later revolts against Moscow; nor were major changes in foreign orientation envisaged, as in the case of Rumania and others. There was to be no sharp break in relations with the communist camp, and no defection from Comecon or the Warsaw Pact. Nor was there an immediate and spontaneous rejection of collectivization, as in Hungary and Poland, or a radical reconstruction of the economy, such as followed the initial break by Yugoslavia.⁸⁰

It was only in the political realm that "the changes envisaged, and in part introduced were more drastic and more rapid than anything attempted elsewhere, and aimed at nothing less than a "socialist democracy".⁸¹

The leaders of the movement firmly indicated that it was the Communist party which should remain in power and rule, if possible, alone. Some intellectuals speculated about a representation of other parties or groups,⁸² but the leaders in power did not intend to introduce democracy on the basis of a multi-party system. They spoke and wrote about "socialist democracy" with freedom of expression,⁸³ abolition of terror, abolition of censorship and more independence for state organs on the politburo.

They also wanted more freedom of discussion in the Parliament, but without any opposition parties, it was particularly freedom only for the communist members of the Parliament, because the number of deputies of the National Front parties is negligible.

All these reforms were basically contained in the Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, approved by the Central Committee on April 5, 1968. The Program confirmed the charges that have taken place since January 1968 and—what the population accepted with great acclaim—it promised legal and political guarantees of the personal and political rights of all citizens. There also was a promise of rehabilitation of those innocently jailed and persecuted and a pledge of constitutional guarantees of freedom of assembly and association.⁸⁴

Still more significant than the official statement and programs were the views of writers freely expressed in journals like *Kultúrny život* or *Nové slovo* which, after it had been banned when Husák was condemned as bourgeois nationalist, began to appear again. The writers asked for

much more than the political leaders promised, and in hundreds of articles or answers to the question "what could be done to accelerate the process of democratization"⁸⁵ they created an atmosphere that gave to the population the feeling of freedom and of big hopes for the future. At the same time they irritated, however, Moscow and her satellites.

After the threatening letter from Warsaw not only Moscow but also the other communist countries reacted with increasing pressure. Dubček, supported by the majority of the population, resisted the pressure and it seemed that after the Conference at Čierna nad Tisou on July 14, and especially after the meeting of the representatives of all 5 communist countries in Bratislava on August 3rd, the differences were settled and the danger of an intervention avoided. Czechs and Slovaks were still engaged in a free discussion of the necessity of reforms⁸⁶ and planned the congresses of both the Czechoslovak and Slovak Communist Parties, when during the night of August 20, the country was brutally invaded by the forces of the Warsaw Pact and the liberalization and democratization process was dramatically brought to an end.⁸⁷

The planned reforms, the atmosphere of freedom, the abolition of censorship and terror, even if the Communist party was to remain in power, was unacceptable for Moscow. All this represented dangerous ideological innovations and seemed to be too contagious to be tolerated by the leaders of the Kremlin and the autocratic rulers in Warsaw, Budapest and East Germany. As it later appeared from Moscow's explanation of the invasion, Hitler's "Lebensraum doctrine" was replaced by Brezhnev's doctrine of the right of the Soviet Union to intervene in the socialist countries and to impose the Soviet system and social order on the lands within the Soviet zone of influence.

While the liberalization process was aborted by the invasion, the federalization process was not basically affected. For some time it seemed that Moscow could convince G. Husák, who became leader of the Slovak Communist Party, to accept another solution: an "independent" Slovak Socialist Republic or a Slovak Soviet Republic within the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. This

solution of the 50 years old dispute over the relations between the Slovaks and Czechs was considered even in the West as highly probable, because both a Soviet socialist republic and an independent Slovak State were the aim of the Slovak uprising of 1944, in its original stage.⁸⁸

The reaction to the invasion was, however, of such intensity and the feelings against Moscow were so strong, that neither Husák nor anybody else was ready to lead the Slovaks out of Czecho-Slovakia at this time. Husák accepted the function of the head of a commission in charge of preparing the transformation of Czecho-Slovakia into a confederation of two republics, the Czech and the Slovak Socialist Republic and he used all his perseverance and ability to this end.

The constitutional law, transforming the centralist state ruled by the Czechs, was adopted by the Assembly on October 27, 1968, as Law No. 143. It was signed and solemnly proclaimed on October 30, at the Bratislava Castle in Slovakia, with the provision that it will take effect on January 1st, 1969.

At the signing ceremonies the President of the Republic, Ludvik Svoboda, termed federalization a progressive and historic act that would improve the social order and welfare of both Czechs and Slovaks. Alexander Dubček, the First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and G. Husák, the Secretary of the Slovak Communist Party, spoke of federalization as strengthening the unity of the state and creating a basis for better future relations between the Czechs and Slovaks.

Slovaks, especially Slovak youth of Bratislava, cheered outside the Bratislava Castle when the law was signed, even though its contents were not known in detail and the reminiscences of a similar law adopted in 1938 and its subsequent violation by Prague 6 months later, were not forgotten by the Slovak people. The fear of a possible inclusion of Slovakia into the Soviet Union, if Slovakia completely separated from the Czechs, compels apparently even many of those Slovaks who do not believe that the Czechs would honor the new agreements, to accept federalization as a solution to the Slovak problem in the present international situation.

The constitutional law signed in Bratislava, establishes

the basic federal structure, leaving specific provisions about the rights and responsibilities of the federal organs to another law which was passed by the National Assembly in November. Basically, the constitutional changes solve the problem of the existence of two nations—the Czech and the Slovak—by setting up a federal National Assembly consisting of an Assembly of the People, elected on the basis of proportional representation, and an Assembly of Nations, in which Czechs and Slovaks will have equal representation. In this respect the Soviet constitution seemed to be the model while in other respects the federal structure of Czecho-Slovakia is similar to the structure of European and American constitutions. Law No. 143 reserves to the federal domain responsibilities for foreign policy, defense and currency and the areas of culture and education are reserved to the domain of the member-states to the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic. Both republics have equal status according to this Law and the sovereignty of both “national states” should be respected.

However, this “sovereignty” is limited by the articles 7 to 28 of the Law to such an extent, that we can hardly compare the new Czecho-Slovakia with Switzerland or the Canadian Federation. Even less can the federal structure of Czecho-Slovakia be compared with Austria-Hungary after the Ausgleich of 1867, which historically and politically is the closest example. However, one of the interesting features of this constitutional reform is the provision of Law No. 143 about the “right of self-determination” which gives the Slovaks the right to secession.

The political autonomy which the “Law on the Federation” provides for Slovakia is, on the other hand, limited by the fact that the Communist Party was not reorganized to reflect the federal structure of the State. As a result the political power remains concentrated in, and the most important decisions will be taken in Prague by bodies composed of a majority of Czech members. Since many Czechs accepted only reluctantly the federalization of the Republic, difficulties and dissensions are to be expected.

For the second time in three decades the Slovak struggle for national rights within a federalized Czecho-Slovakia was fought in the middle of an international crisis: in 1938 in the Munich crisis and in 1968 under the Soviet occupa-

tion. It remains to be seen whether Prague learned the lesson this time or whether there will be an aftermath as in 1939.

Slovaks in the free world accepted the federalization with distrust and misgivings and did not ease to advocate the right of the Slovak people for an independent, democratic Slovak Republic.⁸⁹

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- 1) See H. G. Skilling, *Communism National and International* (Toronto, 1964), pp. 86-95, and William E. Griffith, *Communism in Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), II, pp. 257-65.
- 2) S. Z. Pech, "New Avenues in Eastern European History", *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, X, 1 (1968), 14-15. See also W. F. Griffith, "Myth and Reality in Czechoslovak History", *Eastern European History*, II, 3, 84.
- 3) See Wm. Diamond, *Czechoslovakia Between East And West* (London, 1947), p. 50 and Štefan Glejdura, *Los Grandes Problemas Del Este Europeo: Eslovaquia* (Madrid, 1968), pp. 29-32. Slovak communists were supported in obtaining this especially by Gottwald, who proclaimed the agreement to the "Magna Charta of the Slovak Nation". See Griffith, *Communism in Europe*, pp. 183-93.
- 4) See Skilling, "The Czechoslovak Constitutional System: The Soviet Impact," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXVII, 2 (1952); Griffith, *Communism in Europe*, pp. 135 ff., and K. Glaser, *Czecho-Slovakia: A Critical History* (Caldwell, Id., 1960), pp. 87-139.
- 5) G. Husák, one of the main leaders, declared at the beginning of the uprising: "It must be said openly that our people would welcome with enthusiasm the removal of frontiers and customs between us and the other Slav nations, especially between Slovaks and Russians," *Nové Slovo*, September 24, 1944. See also S. Falt'an, *Historický časopis*, 4 (1966), 589. L. Novomeský, who was sent during the uprising from Slovakia to London, did not "conceal his doubts as to whether it was wise for Slovakia to remain within the small Czechoslovakia when it could join the great Soviet Union," J. Korbel, *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948* (Princeton, 1959), p. 72. See also Griffith, *Communism in Europe*, pp. 179-85 and Joseph A. Mikuš, *Slovakia: A Political History 1918-1930* (Milwaukee, Wis., 1963) pp. 185-90.
- 6) Jozef Jablonický, "Slovenské národné povstanie — nová fáza v riešení vzťahov medzi Čechmi a Slovákmi" (Slovak National Uprising: A New Phase in the Solution of the Relations between the Czechs and Slovaks), *Historický časopis*, XII, 3 (1964), 236. See also J. Korbel, *The Communist Subversion*, pp. 32, 68-72, and S. Falt'an, *Historický časopis*, XII, 140, 2, 161-84.
- 7) For details on the religious situation in Slovakia after 1945 see

- T. G. Zúbek, *The Church of Silence in Slovakia* (Whiting, Indiana, 1956); Štefan Náhalka, *La Slovacchia d'Oggi* (Rome, 1957); Joseph Paučo, *Christian Slovakia* (Valparaiso, Ind., 1959); J. A. Mikuš, *op. cit.* p. 164-185 and P. Hnilica, S. J., "The Church under Totalitarian Rule" in Collier and Glaser (ed.), *Elements of Change in Eastern Europe*, (Chicago, 1968), pp. 136-149.
- 8) See Kirschbaum, "Slovak Literature under the Soviet Impact", *Slavic and East European Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 1, and Imrich Kružliak, *Kultúrne Slovensko v rokoch 1945-1966* (Culture in Slovakia in the years 1945-66), (Munich, 1967).
 - 9) Skilling, *The Governments of Communist East Europe*, *op. cit.*, p. 202, and "People's Democracy, The Proletarian Dictatorship and the Czechoslovak Path to Socialism", *The American Slavic and East European Review*, X, 2 (April 1951), 100-16.
 - 10) Skilling, *Communism national . . .*, *op. cit.*, p. 88. The Communist Party of Slovakia was founded in May 1939 as an illegal party and was recognized as an independent party by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, as well as by the leaders of the Czech Communist Party in Moscow. It maintained its independence until 1948. For more details see Z. Eliáš and J. Netík "Czechoslovakia" in W. E. Griffith *Communism in Europe*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1966) 2. volume pp. 174-186 and Bohuslav Graca "Komunistická strana Slovenska" (The Communist Party of Slovakia), *Nová Mysl*, No. 5, May 1961.
 - 11) Even in the party the Slovaks were poorly represented at the center, with their chief spokesman the Prime Minister, Široký, and the Slovak party chief, Bacílek, both only partly Slovak in origin. Pavol David was the only undisputed Slovak in the party command. Skilling, *Communism National*, *op. cit.* p. 94; See also Griffith, *op. cit.* pp. 210-215 and Mikuš, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-302.
 - 12) Táborický, *op. cit.* p. 336 and H. G. Skilling, "The Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960 and the transition to Communism", *Journal of Politics*, XXIV, 1, 1962, pp. 156-59. See also Edward Kučera, *K některým otázkám autonomie a postavení Slovenska v rámci Československé Republiky* (About Some Questions of Autonomy and the Position of Slovakia within the Framework of the Czechoslovak Republic), (Prague, 1954). Jan Moural *Slovenské národní orgány* (Slovak National Organs), (Prague, 1958) and *Collection of Laws of the Slovak National Council*, (Bratislava, 1954).
 - 13) Skilling, *The Governments of Communist East Europe*, *op. cit.* p. 156 and Táborický *op. cit.* pp. 338-240, and Griffith, *op. cit.* p. 235 and off.
 - 14) Several Slovak Communist intellectuals made attempts at definitions of this period.
 - 15) See *Kultúrny Život*, April 27, 1963—Proceedings of the Congress of the Slovak Writers.
 - 16) After the execution of V. Clementis, Slovaks were withdrawn from practically all diplomatic posts abroad (out of 97 ambassadors only 5 were Slovaks) and writers, who served as cultural attaches were

- hit particularly hard. On Clementis see Griffith, *op. cit.*, p. 176 and Mikuš, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-298.
- 17) Skilling, *Communism National . . .*, *op. cit.* pp. 88, 85, 84 resp. and Glejdura, *loc. cit.*
 - 18) Novomeský, quoted by Skilling, *ibid.* p. 117.
 - 19) Táborský, *op. cit.* p. 344, See also Skilling, *Communism national . . .* *op. cit.* pp. 94-96.
 - 20) *Pravda*, May 1st, 1956.
 - 21) *Pravda*, January 10 and 11, 1958, quoted in Táborský, *op. cit.* p. 344.
 - 22) See Pavel Berka's article in *Československý přehled*, vol. 5 (1958), p. 27 and Táborský, *op. cit.* p. 345.
 - 23) On Slovak Nationalism see B. S. Buc, *Slovak Nationalism* (Middletown, Pa.), 1960, R. A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire* (Rutgers University Press), 1950, J. A. Mikuš, *La Slovaquie, individualite politique de l'Europe centrale* (Centre de documentation internationale, Paris) 1958, L. Gogolak, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Slowakischen Volkes* (Munich) 1963 and E. Denis, *La Question d'Autriche — Les Slovaques* (Paris), 1917.
 - 24) As Skilling writes, Western scholars "have failed to see that subjection of Slovaks to centralized Czech Communist rule has not dimmed the feeling of Slovak nationalism, even among Communists, and could produce a brave response." See "Czechoslovakia", in A. Bromke (ed.), *The Communist states at the crossroads*, (Praeger, New York, 1965), p. 103.
 - 25) See Z. Eliáš and J. Netík in Griffith, *Communism in Europe*, *op. cit.* p. 162.
 - 26) Táborský, *op. cit.* pp. 345-6. See also Skilling, *Communism national . . .*, *op. cit.* pp. 112-130.
 - 27) Among Canadian scholars it is especially Prof. H. Gordon Skilling who published several well documented studies on this period. In the United States S. D. Kertesz, Philip E. Mosley, William E Griffith and K. Glaser and D. S. Collier as editors or contributors to symposia brought the problems to the attention of Western readers. On the Slovak side the weekly *Kultúrny Život* became the main tribune. The articles by M. Hysko, O. Pavlík, E. Löbl, L. Mňačko, G. Husák, F. Falt'an, L. Novomeský, V. Mihálik and others analyzed the period of the cult of personality. On the Czech side the periodical *Nová Mysl*, *Literární Noviny* and *Literární Listy* offer a number of interesting articles by Czech intellectuals on this subject.
 - 28) See articles in *Kultúrny Život* by Ondrej Pavlík (April 27, and August 10, 1963) and by V. Mihálik and V. Peťko (May 25 and April 20 respectively, and an article by J. Fojtik in *Rudé Právo* (March 29, 1963).
 - 29) Philip E. Mosley, "Eastern Europe in World Power Politics", D. S. Collier and K. Glaser, (ed.), *Elements of Change in Eastern Europe*, Chicago, 1966, pp. 61-62.
- *) As wrote prof. Mosley in 1965.
- 30) *Usnesení a dokumenty ústředního výboru komunistické strany Československa*, Vol. II, (Prague, 1962), pp. 5-57. English excerpts of

- this speech can be found in A. Dallin, *Diversity in International Communism* (Columbia U. P. New York), 1963, pp. 298-313.
- 31) See M. Hysko's speech at the Congress of Slovak journalists, published in *Pravda*, June 13, 1963.
 - 32) The first open student manifestation against the regime in 1956 occurred in Slovakia's capital, Bratislava, during a student's festival, In a procession through Bratislava's streets, Slovak university students carried a coffin with the following inscription: "Here lay buried democratic liberties". As the official radio Bratislava admitted, "this soon became a stirring and well-liked slogan." See Ducháček, *loc. cit.* p. 105.
 - 33) Ducháček, *ibid.*, p. 103.
 - 34) H. G. Skilling "Eastern Europe and the West" in A. Bromke (ed.). *The Communist States and the West*, (A. Praeger. 1967), p. 53.
 - 35) Ducháček, *op. cit.* p. 98, see also pp. 112-118.
 - 36) Skilling, *Communism national...*, *op. cit.* p. 90.
 - 37) According to Eliáš and Netík: "The predominant mood among the masses was one of indolence, striving for the satisfaction of crass material desires, general mistrust, and a decline of civic morale. Pilfering in industrial and agricultural enterprises, negligence in consumer services, a sorry state of disrepair in buildings, roads, machinery, and the like, although constantly deplored in the press, came to be accepted as a matter of course. The slogan "He who does not steal from the state steals from his family" was entirely symptomatic to the popular mood of the period, in spite of the fact that the supply of food and consumer goods had improved sufficiently to satisfy most normal needs of the population. *loc. cit.* p. 275.
 - 38) Skilling, *Communism national...*, *op. cit.* p. 194.
 - 39) See *Rudé Právo*, November 24 and December 12, 1961.
 - 40) This survey concerns itself mainly with Slovakia and its role in the de-Stalinization process and, therefore, we will put the emphasis, without underestimating the Czech element, on the part which Slovakia and Slovaks played in this period.
 - 41) The Slovak Communist leaders, G. Husák, L. Novomeský, D. Okáli and others, were actually imprisoned already in 1951-1952 and only their trials took place in 1954. For an interesting survey of the purges of Slovak "bourgeois nationalists" see "O nezákonných procesoch a rehabilitácii od roku 1948" (About the illegal processes and rehabilitation since 1948). *Výber*, June 1968 and Mikuš, *op. cit.* pp. 291-302.
 - 42) Táborský, *op. cit.* p. 66.
 - 43) See Hromada, *Prehľad československých štátnych orgánov* (A survey of Czechoslovak State Organs), (Bratislava, 1955), p. 26, K. Glaser, *op. cit.* pp. 154-178, Z. Eliáš and J. Netík in W. E. Griffith, *op. cit.* p. 197 and ff, and Mikuš, *op. cit.* pp. 227-302. J. Netík and J. Franko *Communism and Slovakia* (Evaluation Report of R F E Research Unit, November 17, 1960).
 - 44) Táborský, *op. cit.* p. 214. See also Mikuš, *op. cit.* pp. 226-224.
 - 45) *Rudé Právo*, May 27, 1950. See also his article in *Pravda*, June 16,

- 1963 in which he charged that the personality cult "deformed life and violated our socialist humanism".
- 46) This has been admitted also by some Czech writers in the West. "The wave of outspoken criticism clearly originated in Slovakia; but it was carried on, though in somewhat muted tones, at the Prague Writers' Third Congress on May 22-24, which heard a number of frank and courageous statements, particularly from the younger "literáti". Z. Eliáš and J. Netík in Griffith, *op. cit.* p. 262.
 - 47) See *Kultúrny Život*, April 27 and May 4, 1963.
 - 48) G. Husák recently published his account in *Nové Slovo*, June 1968, but it was known right after his release from jail. L. Holdoš published his account in *Smena*, March 23, 1968, and both these "memoirs" describe the most revolting brutalities to which human beings were ever subject. E. Löbl published his experiences in a book *Svedectvo o procese* (Testimony about the Process) Bratislava, 1968. For excerpts in English see The Telegram (Toronto) July 18-19, 1968.
 - 49) *Pravda*, Bratislava, June 3, 1963.
 - 50) With Husák working behind the scenes, they also became later the "brain trust" of Alexander Dubček, who was educated in the Soviet Union as an *apparatchik*, but retained an understanding for the human desire for freedom.
 - 51) See F. Vnuk, *Sedemnást' neúrodných rokov* (Seventeen Barren Years), (An outline of Slovak Literature) in 1945-62, Middletown, Pa., 1965, and I. Kružliak, *Kultúrne Slovensko v rokoch 1945-1966* (Culture in Slovakia in the years 1945-1966), Munich 1967.
 - 52) *Kultúrny Život*, Vol. XVIII, No. 17, 1963, articles by P. Karvaš, A. Plávka, L. Mňačko, M. Chorváth and others.
 - 53) K. Rosenbaum, *ibidem*, No. 18 and J. Bžoch, No. 20.
Some writers had the courage to say even before the Congresses that "the cult of personality, closely knit with dogmatism, limited and hampered creative scientific work" and that "from the field of social sciences mostly suffered historiography of the recent period". Samo Falt'an, "História a dnešok" (History and the Present), *Kultúrny Život*, Vol. XVIII, No. 12, 1963. At the Congress of Slovak Journalists Hysko also said that "the socialist journalist should respect directions only if they are not in conflict with the fundamental principles of socialist morality". *Pravda*, June 13, 1963. The significance of Hysko's speech lies in the fact that he brought into the open many Slovak grievances, in particular the treatment of Slovaks at the hands of the Czech leadership.
 - 54) Mináč created a storm of protests also in 1968 by accusing the policy of Dr. Beneš as an attempt "near genocide" of the Slovak people. See *Výber*, July 5, 1968, pp.9-11.
 - 55) Skilling, *Communism national*, *op. cit.* pp. 114-116.
For the text of speeches and resolutions see *Kultúrny Život*, Vol. XVIII, No. 21, 22 (resolutions) and 23. See also K. Greiner "Wurzeln der liberalisierung Tendenzen in der Tschecho-Slowakei". In *Entwicklungen im Kommunismus* (Verband der Freien Presse), Munich, 1967, pp. 123-131.

- 56) *Kultúrny Život*, Vol. XVIII, No. 21.
- 57) Ibidem, No. 22.
- 58) Ibidem.
- 59) Z. Eliáš and J. Netík in Wm. E. Griffith, *Communism in Europe*, op. cit. p. 157.
- 60) *Pravda*, (Bratislava), June 13, 1963. For fuller discussion see Skilling *Communism national ...*, op. cit. pp. 122-124.
- 61) See *Rudé Právo*, August 22, 1963. On the purges of Slovak "Bourgeois nationalists" see E. Friš, *Plameň*, no. 8, August 1964, Z. Eliáš and J. Netík in Griffith, op. cit. pp. 210-215 and Mikuš, op. cit. pp. 291-302.
- 62) See *Pravda*, (Bratislava), September 23, 1963. On Široký and his role in Slovak politics see Mikuš, op. cit. p. 298.
- 63) See H. Kuhn, "Czechoslovakia", in D. Vollier and K. Glaser (ed.) op. cit. pp. 161-164, and K. Greiner, loc. cit. pp. 117-148.
- 64) In the respect the economist Eugen Löbl who was imprisoned with R. Slánský, led the struggle in *Kultúrny Život*, H. Kočtúch in *Slovenské pohľady*; see also R. Selucký in *Kultúrny Život*, (August 10, 1963, September 28, 1963, November 2, 1963), and *Hospodárske Noviny*, (November 8 and 15, 1963), for the Czech views.
- 65) Several intellectuals were dealing with the ideological deformation: O. Pavlík, M. Kusý, J. Uher, G. Husák, L. Mňačko, K. Rosenbaum, M. Hamada, and others, not only in *Kultúrny Život*, but also in *Pravda* (Bratislava), *Plameň*, and *Smena* (Bratislava).
- 66) The sharpest attacks on Prague's cultural policy towards Slovakia were written by the poet V. Mihalík. See *Kultúrny Život*, No. 49, 1965 and No. 8, 1966.
- 67) Against the misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Slovak history and of the role the Slovaks played during the War see the writings of Slovak intellectuals in *Historický časopis* (Historical Review) as well as *Kultúrny Život*. Among the best articles were those written by S. Falt'an, K. Lupták, J. Fabián, E. Friš. See also G. Husák, *Svedectvo o slovenskom národnom povstaní* (Testimony about the Slovak National Uprising), (Bratislava, 1964).
- 68) See E. Löbl, "O dogmatizme v ekonomickom myslení" (About Dogmatism in Economic Thinking), *Kultúrny Život*, Sept. 28, No. 39, and Oct. 12, No. 41, 1963. Ota Šík, "Akoby nemal vyzerat' antidogmatizmus" (What anti-dogmatism should not be like), *Kultúrny Život*, No. 44, Nov. 2, 1963, and the proposals of the economists for the perfection and planned direction of the National Economy, *Rudé Právo*, Oct. 17, 1964.
- 69) "The Slovak problem does exist in our country—wrote in 1964 K. Bartoška—of a complexity and urgency that we failed to realize and did not want to admit. It turns out that the economic equalization of the Czech lands and of Slovakia is not the exhaustive solution of the Slovak complex question". *Plameň*, No. 5, 1964.
- 70) Eliáš and Netík, in Griffith, op. cit. p. 275.
- 71) For fuller discussion of the years following the Congress of Writers, see Z. Eliáš and Netík in Griffith, op. cit. pp. 260-277.
- 72) On Bacílek and his role in the persecution of Slovak "bourgeois

- nationalists" see Taborský, *op. cit.* p. 344, Griffith, *op. cit.* p. 176 and Mikuš, *op. cit.* pp. 291-302.
- 73) See *Kultúrny Život*, May-July, 1968, and Jacques Marcelle, *Le Deuxieme Coup de Prague* (Les Editions Vie Ouvriere, Bruxelles, 1968), pp. 183-189.
- 74) "The sense of urgency which the Slovaks felt about federalism was not matched in the Czech lands", writes Skilling, "and there was dissatisfaction in Slovakia with the slow pace of planning. There was, however, considerable difference of opinion about the distribution of authority under the proposed federal constitution, with some Slovaks arguing for a very narrow range of federal authority, including only foreign affairs, defense, and finance, and others, mainly Czechs, seeking a much stronger central authority. Even more productive of controversy was the Slovak demand for Parity of representation in the central organs, both executive and legislative, a demand which most Czechs, in spite of their readiness to adopt provisions protecting vital Slovak interests against outvoting by the Czech majority, were unwilling to accept." See Skilling, 'Czecho-Slovakia's Interrupted Revolution', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, vol. X, 4, 1968, p. 419.
- 75) The historian Miloš Gosiorovský is credited with the initiative, but Novotný refused to discuss his proposal and ordered sanctions against him. See *Výber*, July 19, 1968, pp. 7-8.
- 76) According to *Pravda* (Bratislava), February 2, 1968, he said in his first major policy statement on February 1st, 1968: "The Czechs and the Slovaks are nations both equal and able to create their own states. It is our role to strengthen and, in practice, safeguard our people's belief that the Republic open to Czechs and Slovaks additional prospects..."
- 77) On the role of Slovakia see G. Husák, "Prínos k januárovým zmenám" (Slovak contribution to the post-January changes), *Výber*, December 6, 1968.
- 78) In this respect namely the so-called "Two Thousand Words" manifesto deserves mention. It provoked an angry reaction in Moscow and in Warsaw at the meeting of the communist parties, on July 15, at which five communist parties sent a threatening letter to Prague. The manifesto was published by *Literární Listy* on June 27, 1968 and was conceived by the communist writer Ludvík Vaculík.
- 79) For a survey of events and documentary articles see Pierre Desgraupes and Pierre Dumayet (ed.), *Prague — l'été des tanks*, "L'Histoire à la Une", (Paris, 1968), the monthly *East Europe*, January-September, 1968, and Jacques Marcelle, *Le Deuxième coup de Prague*, (Editions Vie Ouvrière, Bruxelles, 1968).
- 80) Skilling, *loc cit.* p. 409.
- 81) Skilling, *ibid.* p. 410.
- 82) See M. Lakatoš, "Some Problems of Socialist Democracy..." *Právny Obzor*, 3, (1968). According to J. Bob they wanted "cultural, humanistic, democratic" Socialism. See *Kultúrny Život*, May 24, 1968.

- 83) Openly anti-communist views were of course not allowed. Only the past policies of the Communist Party could be freely criticised.
- 84) Rehabilitation was embodied in a law passed in June, but it referred only to those who were tried between October 1948 and July 1965. It left out thousands of victims condemned for political reasons between 1945-1948 when anti-communists were systematically eliminated from public life, jailed or executed. See Mikuš, *op. cit.* pp. 167-68. According to Skilling the Action Programme "was a relatively moderated programme, acceptable to the conservative and moderate reformers, but not satisfying the more radical ones". *Loc. cit.* p. 426.
- 85) See an answer by five Slovak writers in *Kultúrny Život*, June 21, 1968. See also G. Husák "Dejinná príležitosť" (A Historical occasion), *Pravda* (Bratislava, May 9, 1968).
- 86) On the reaction of Slovak intellectuals to the invasion see L. Mňačko, "Die siebente Nacht — Erkenntnis und Anklage eines Kommunisten" (The Seventh Night — Confession and Accusation of a Communist), (Verlag Fritz Molden, Wien, München, Zürich), October 1968, and Slovak journals of September-December. On the international implications see Adam Bromke "Czechoslovakia and the World: 1968", *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, X, 4, pp. 581-591. On the reaction of the Government and of the Communist Parties, see *Dokumenty o okupácii ČSR* (Documents on the occupation of Czecho-Slovakia), Bratislava 1968.
- 87) Among the contributions to the discussion on democratization and federalization worth of mentioning are: H. Kočtuch "Federácia? Konfederácia?", *Kultúrny Život*, March 22, 1968, and "Budúce možnosti a možná budúcnosť", *Nové slovo*, June 13, 1968; Július Strinka "Federalizácia a demokratizácia", *Kultúrny život*, Apríl 5, 1968; Prof. K. Plank, "Niekoľko úvah o federalizácii nášho štátu", *Sloboda*, June 28, 1968; Dr. M. Gašpar, "Aspekty federalizácie ČSR", *Sloboda*, June 14, 1968; and "Federalizácia — Demokracia", *Výber*, July 19, 1968.
- 88) See *Historický časopis* (Historical Review), Vol. XII, 3, 1964, and *Nové slovo*, September 24, 1944, as well as part one of this survey.
- 89) See articles and comment on this subject in *Slovák v Amerike* (U.S.A.), *Kanadský Slovák* (Canada), *Černákov Odkaz* (Germany), *Slovenský Štít* (Australia) etc.

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As Americans, members of the Slovak League of America firmly believe that the Slovak nation, just as all nations, has an inherent and God-given right to freedom and independence. They are dedicated to the cause of the American way of life, Slovak freedom and world peace and are determined to oppose the plague of Communism and all other totalitarian political systems.

The Slovaks of Chicago

DR. PETER P. HLETKO

The first Slovaks in Chicago

While the records are vague, according to some public and official records it would seem that probably the first Slovak who came to Chicago was one G. Michalovič alias Mihalócy (a Magyar spelling). He took active part in the Civil War. He joined the forces of Abraham Lincoln and supposedly organized an artillery battalion consisting of various Slavic nationalities. He was cited by President Lincoln, who wrote Michalovič a personal letter, thanking him for his services.

Around 1872 another Slovak named Doročák same to Chicago from County Spiš in Slovakia. He was followed by Daniel Schustek, whose name was well known in the life of the early Chicago Slovaks.

Then more Slovaks came and by 1892 there were some 300 in Chicago. That is not a very big number but already then they began to organize into a fraternal system. In that year—two years after the National Slovak Society was organized in Pennsylvania, the Slovaks in Chicago organized an assembly (Odbor 65) of the N.S.S., a non-denominational society. After the First Catholic Slovak Union (the Jednota) was founded in Cleveland, the Chicago Catholic Slovaks organized St. Stephen's Society as Branch 224 of the FCSU. The third society organized was the "First Slovak Sokol," an independent and non-denominational gymnastic society. The group no longer exists. In 1893 these Slovak fraternal groups participated in the parade arranged by the committee of the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. They paraded under the Slovak banner, and they had some difficulty in obtaining a Slovak flag. They had one made.

The early Slovaks in Chicago

By 1900 the Slovaks kept coming from the old country, from all parts of Slovakia. It is well-nigh impossible to find records about all of them but at least the following

are definitely known to have been here between 1890 and 1900. The year of their arrival is in parentheses:

Andrej Adamčík (1894), Ján Balek (1894), J. Bavľšík, Ján Belčík (1893), Ján Bugajský (1898), Ján Canik (1894), Ján Druska, Jozef Gabaj (1886), Karol Grohovský (1893), Andrej Gura (1899), Anton Gura (1899), Karol Gura (1889), Štefan Gura (1889), Ján Haluška, Martin Hletko (father of Dr. Peter P. Hletko and Dr. S. J. Hletko 1899), Ján Horvát (1899), Ján Ivorík, Imrich Ježišík (1877), Jozef Juranka (1894), Ján Keblušek (1890), Klinovský (1888), Florián Kojiš (1898), Mikuláš Krajčí (1889), Peter Krajčí (1889), Samuel Krč (1896), Pavol Kvorka (1890), František Kubiš (1898), Pavol Kubiš (1888), František Kuna (1899), Pavol Kurucár, Stulík (1892), Michal Laca (1892), Ján Majer (1893), Jozef Mallý (1891), Karol Mallý (1893), Ján Matejičko (1898), Štefan Meliška (1898), Andrej Mičuda (1899), Gustav Mičuda (1899), Jozef Novota (1898), Ján Orendáč (1899), Samuel Papánek (1890), Ján Paur (1893), Ján Pavelčík (1886), Pavol Pavelčík (1893), Jozef Pircoň (1889), Andrej Schustek (1889), Ján Šlahor (1891), Imrich Podkrivacký, Ján Podmajerský (1896), Juraj Púčik (1884), Daniel Samuel (1898), Andrej Sedory (1888), Andrej Schustek (1889), Ján Schustek, Ján Šlahor (1891), Ján Sokolík, Andrej Sokolík, Ján Švehla, Adam Trubaček (1890), Juraj Vatrál, Jozef Zahumenský (1897), Adam Žiška, František Žiška and Jozef Žiška, Štefan Kováč (1897), Martin Dujmovič (1897). Others known to be here prior to 1900 were: M. Vitko, (father of the late Rev. Joseph Vitko, who died in Omaha, Nebraska). J. Madeja, John Lipovský, J. Hajzuš, J. Lehocký, J. Jurík, John Mičuš, Kollárik, Čandár, Dučaj, Podhorský, Pelikán and others.

Because the Slovaks are a religious people, whether they are Catholic or Lutheran, they began attending their respective church services in the churches existing here already. But they were not satisfied with Latin or English services. They yearned for their own. Many of them attended St. Procopius Church, a Czech church at 18th and Allport St. Many of the Slovak Catholics settled on the West side in the vicinity of De Koven St., St. Wenceslaus parish (site of Mrs. Oleary's barn where the cow kicked over a lantern and started the great Chicago fire of 1871. A humorous story has it that the cow was owned

by a Czech women, Mrs. Uhlíř, but because the newspaper reporters could not spell or pronounce "Uhlíř", it became Mrs. O'Leary, because that seemed close enough.) Another contingent gravitated south and west where they found the first Catholic Slovak church in Chicago, St. Michael's, at 48th and Winchester. Originally land was purchased for a church on Archer Ave., but this was given up. Church services began to be held every Sunday in a hall back of a tavern at 49th St. and Paulina St. Father Bronkala was the first pastor. A church was built at 48th and Winchester with two rooms in 1900. Sisters Walburga and Paulina, both of the Czech Benedictine convent in Lisle, Ill., and both being Slovaks, were the first two teachers in the school.

The next pastor was Rev. S. Pavolčík, but when financial troubles arose, the Bohemian Benedictine Fathers in Lisle, Ill., were appointed in charge of the parish. Rev. Bartolomej Kvitek, OSB., became the pastor and he did much to build the parish and put it on solid foundation. He left about 1911 and was followed by Rev. Thomas Vopatek, OSB., and eventually by Rev. Gregory Vaniščík, OSB., the so-called "first Slovak Benedictine in America", who later organized the Slovak Benedictine Fathers in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Slovaks in Chicago have 8 Slovak Catholic parishes

St. Michael's at 48th and Damen Avenue. A new combination church and school building was built in 1907. A few years later another school building was erected to accomodate a total of some 1,200 school children. St. Michael's parish at one time was the largest Slovak Catholic parish in America. Recently the original old church was taken down and a fine new social center was erected. Rev. Armand Gress, OSB., pastor, Rev. L. Hudák, OSB., and Rev. Maruškin, OSB., assistants. The parish has a large convent and a large rectory.

After Rev. Gregory Vaniščík, OSB. left for Cleveland, the late Rev. Charles Florek, OSB., was pastor for many years and his assistant for 22 years was the Rev. Ambrose Ondrak, OSB., who later became abbot of the Bohemian Benedictine Abbey in Lisle, Ill., and had to leave St. Michael's to assume his new duties as abbot.

Assumption of the B. V. M. at 24th St. and California. Organized in 1903, at about the same time as St. Joseph's parish was being organized. The parish has a combination church and school building, a Sisters' convent, a rectory and an assembly hall under the church, besides several meeting halls. Msgr. Chvojka, pastor emeritus, Rev. J. Spitkovsky, acting pastor.

St. Joseph's parish. Organized in 1904. Has a combination church and school building on 17th Pl., near Halsted St. Recently a new school building was built, with a large auditorium and bowling alleys in the basement. The area is becoming a changing neighborhood in recent years and the Slovak parishioners are leaving the locality and moving to newer neighborhoods. For that reason the parish is on the decline. The new school has been turned over to combined classes from a neighboring Lithuanian parish and the former rectory has been loaned to the Lithuanian sisters after the Slovak sisters from the Bohemian Order of St. Benedict in Lisle, Ill., gave up the school. The administrator of the parish, Rev. Slosarčík, lives at the nearby Lithuanian rectory. Msgr. John Rondzik, now retired, has been pastor for many years. The latest report is that parish will cease to exist.

Holy Rosary parish at 108th and Perry Sts. Organized in 1907. The parish built a new church in recent years. A school, convent and rectory complete the properties of the parish. Rev. Andrew Valčíčák is pastor, Rev. J. Dilla is assistant. The parish is located in the Pullman-Roseland area.

St. John the Baptist. Organized in 1909 at 91st and So. Burley Ave., in the South Chicago district. The parish purchased an existing church in 1910. The property consists of this original church, with a hall in the basement and a rectory adjoining. The parish has no school. This parish has never prospered too much and is in a declining neighborhood but Rev. J. Petrik, the present pastor, has given the parish a big lift.

Sacred Heart parish. Organized in 1910. At Huron and Oakley Blvd. A combination church and school building and a new rectory adjacent. For years, Rev. Victor Blahunka, who became the first Slovak Monsignor in America, was pastor. The present pastor is Rev. Francis Košjak.

SS. Cyril and Methodius parish. At Walton St. and Kildare Ave. Organized January 3, 1914. Rev. Michael Bajor, pastor of the Sacred Heart parish, was the one who promoted the idea of organizing this parish. Rev. Victor Blahunka became the Slovak pastor on March 2, 1915. The parish used the hall of the Guardian Angels parish at Avers and Iowa Sts. as a temporary church. Other pastors who followed were Rev. Michael Buc, Rev. John Fedor and now Rev. A. Chisek. The church is a combination school and church building.

St. Simon parish. This is the youngest Slovak parish. Organized October 1, 1926 at 52nd and So. California Ave., after many years of effort. Rev. E. Sendek was the first pastor. The parish has a combination school and church building, a rectory, a sisters' convent and recently an additional new school building. Rev. Joseph Job, a good Slovak nationalist, was pastor for many years, until his death there. He followed Rev. Sendek, who was transferred to St. Paul's parish in Chicago Heights, Ill. a suburb of Chicago. Father Job was popular and successful as a pastor of St. Simon's. He left a portion of his estate to the Sisters in Tinley Park, Ill., the Slovak League and the St. Adalbert Society of Slovakia. The present pastor is Rev. D. Romančík and Rev. Richard Škríba is assistant.

Slovak Protestant Churches in Chicago

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church is the oldest Lutheran Slovak congregation. It was founded in 1893 and incorporated in 1897. The original church was in the vicinity of Noble St., and Chicago Ave. In time the old neighborhood began declining and the parishioners moved to Mayfair and Jefferson Park so that an auxiliary church was built in Mayfair in 1924. But in 1948 the congregation built a large, modern new church on the north side on Foster and LaCrosse Sts., with an outlay of some \$400,000.

SS. Peter and Paul Lutheran Church. Originally located on 19th St., near Halsted St. on the West Side. Organized in October 1901. With the neighborhood also undergoing changes for the worst, the congregation moved to Riverside into a new church about 10 years ago. Just recently the congregation celebrated 10 years of this moving to Riverside in appropriate church services assisted by some

of the local Catholic clergy, in a real spirit of ecumenism. Rev. Kalný is pastor. Rev. John Body was pastor of the church when it was on the West Side. He is now retired in California.

Zion Slovak Lutheran Church organized in 1909 at Huron St. and Bickerdike. The Bethlehem church merged with the Zion church in about 1926. Later they bought their present church at Iowa St. and Springfield Avenue.

Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church of Dr. Martin Luther. Its first permanent church was at 50th and Honore Sts. from April 1918 to December 1947. In 1949 a new church was built at 54th and Francisco Ave. At one time Rev. Jaroslav Pelikán, Sr., was pastor, who later became involved in "Czecho-Slovak" politics and then transferred to Holy Trinity. The present pastor, after Rev. Roh, is Rev. Figuly. The son of the original pastor, Rev. Jaroslav Pelikán, Sr., who is Rev. Jaroslav Pelikán also, is a respected teacher of the history of religion at Yale University. He wrote the "Riddle of Catholicism" which was well received in Catholic circles, and he is a weekly contributor to the Catholic News Register.

Slovak Baptist New Covenant Church. The beginnings of the Slovak Baptists date back to 1908 when the first Slovak woman, Miss Catherine Nikodem, later Hudáček, became a Baptist by being baptized by immersion. She had been influenced by Vaclav Hlada, a Czech preacher from the Bohemian Baptist Emmanuel congregation. During some of his visits to the homes in the neighborhood he visited the Nikodems and left some books written by the Slovak authoress, Kristina Roy. Young Miss Catherine Nikodem began reading these books and she eventually received the Lord and accepted his truths. The early services were held in the Nikodem home and the newly accepted members belonged to the Czech congregation. In 1915 the Slovak Baptists, numbering 64, met to organize an independent organization of Slovak Baptists. Out of respect to the Czech mother church they accepted the name Emmanuel Slovak Baptist church. Public services were held regularly until 1925 in a synagogue at 1410 W. Augusta Blvd., and from 1925 to 1930 at 2015 W. Augusta Blvd. In 1930 they dedicated a new church at 5857-59 W. Giddings, corner of Marmora Ave. Up to the year 1929

half of the congregation lived on the south side. In that year they became independent and assumed the name Czechoslovak Baptist Church, but later changed it to Trinity Church. Their church was at 5845 So. Rockwell St. The new name, Covenant, was accepted in 1947. The Slovak Baptist church is entirely independent from 1944. Up to that time it was helped and the pastor's salary financed by American Baptists. Some of the names that have appeared in the list of officers over the years include Michal Stančík, Ján Dinga, Pavel Kubík, Michal Plačko, Michal Fraňo, Pavel Hanko and Ján Firak.

The Greek-Catholics

There are any number of Greek-Catholic churches in Chicago, but the Slovaks belong principally to two of them—*St. Mary's*, 49th and So. Seeley, is one. The members of this parish are *all Slovaks* of the Byzantine Eastern Rite, headed by and directly connected with the Holy See, the Roman Catholic Church. The parish has a large church, a school, a rectory and a Sister's Convent. Rev. J. Kurty is pastor.

SS. Peter and Paul Church at 53rd and So. Western is a split-off of *St. Mary's* parish, and the split-off was so complete that they broke ties with Rome, and joined the Greek-Russian Orthodox Church. Rev. Shimkoff is pastor and his son has been his assistant.

Like many of the parishioners of *St. Mary's*, many in the *SS. Peter and Paul Church* mistakenly call themselves "Russians," "Sub-Carpatian Russians," "Greek Catholics," "Rusins," "Rusnaks" etc. Many belligerently deny that they are Slovaks. It's a case of faulty bringing up and lack of proper information or education along these lines. Yet, the members of both of these parishes are Slovaks—from the Spiš, Šariš and Zemplín counties in Slovakia. They are Slovaks who profess the Byzantine Rite, or the Orthodox Rite. Neither of these rites makes them "Russians" or anything else but Slovaks, no more than the Lutheran faith makes our Slovak Lutherans Germans or anything but Slovaks. These Lutherans are Slovaks who profess the Lutheran faith, and they are Slovaks. The "Rusnaks" are Slovaks, who profess the Byzantine rite or Orthodox rite. There are other ethnic groups who profess

these rites or faiths, like the Magyars, but their faith does not change them from Magyars to "Rusnaks," "Russians" or anything else but Magyars. The "Rusnaks" should call a spade and admit that ethnically they are Slovaks.

Societies and Lodges

Although there is a noticeable decline in society and lodge activity in Chicago in the last 25 years, in the main it has remained stable. A few lodges, and even whole societies merged (Tatran Slovak Union, based in Chicago merged with the Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol, Slovak Evangelical Society, also based in Chicago, merged with The Slovak Lutheran Union now called United Lutheran). Others, like the "Veniec Katolíckych Slovákov (Wreath of Catholic Slovaks) just plainly liquidated and stopped existing. But in the main, the lodges have remained in existence. In 1930, at the height of our lodge activity, the following Societies were represented by their lodges as follows:

First Catholic Slovak Union — 26 assemblies; Total 6,811 members.

First Catholic Slovak Ladies' Union — 19 lodges; Total 10,549 members.

Slovak Catholic Sokol — 5 male assemblies and 4 female Wreaths; Total 2,906 members.

Penna. Slovak Catholic Union — 4 local assemblies; 247 members.

Ladies Penna. Slovak Catholic Union — 3 branches; 704 members.

National Slovak Society — 11 assemblies; 2,726 members.

Tatran Slovak Union — 15 of its 27 assemblies were in Chicago; The Society merged with S. G. U. S.

Catholic Order of Foresters — 9 Slovak Courts;

Catholic Order of Ladies Foresters — 4 Slovak Courts;

First Slovak Wreath of Free Eagle — 3 groups (based in Bridgeport, Conn.);

Western Slovak Union — 2 assemblies;

Independent Society of St. Martin — 1 assembly;

Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol — 5 assemblies; 2,826 members.

Club "Furdek"

Club "Furdek" was a social and educational Club designed to unite the intelligentsia of the Chicago Catholic Slovaks. Started in 1930 by Dr. Peter P. Hletko, it lasted some 25 years, then went into abeyance. During its existence it exerted much good influence on the life of the Chicago Slovaks and Slovaks in America, as well. All the local Catholic Slovak priests were members, so were many of the lawyers, physicians and other professional people and the formal annual installation dinners were an outstanding feature of the social season. Many college students and professional people were thus given an opportunity to meet and become mutually acquainted.

Savings and Loan Associations

One of the more profitable businesses of industries in which some of our Chicago Slovaks are engaged is the savings and loan business. The Slovaks, next to the Czechs, were the earliest entrants into this business. No other nationality was in that business any earlier. However, none of our savings and loan institutions controlled and managed by Slovaks ever rose to such gigantic multi-million dollar institutions as have some of those controlled by other ethnic groups. They came into this business much later but have passed up Slovak people and they have built financial giants. But the Slovak S & L's are doing very, very well. Their accounts are insured by the FSLIC to \$15,000 and practically all of them pay $4\frac{3}{4}\%$ on regular passbook accounts and more on certificate deposits.

How early our Slovaks were in the savings and loan business in Chicago may be seen from the history of the First Slovak S & L in Chicago — the "*Dunaj*" (Danube). It was organized on April 1, 1907 in St. Michael's parish on the south side of the city — some 7 years after the founding of the parish. Rev. Bartolomej Kvitek, OSB., a Czech, friendly to the Slovak people, was then pastor and it was he who saw the need for a savings and loan association for his parishioners. His theory was that if the association helped his parishioners to buy and acquire homes in the vicinity of the church, the parishioners would be apt to stay in the neighborhood longer, around

the church, and they would not run off to other areas and to other parishes and churches. This would help keep the parish stable and intact, it would thus help the parish and it would also help the parishioners to home ownership. Father Kvitek called a few parishioners for consultation, they then called a meeting and founded the "Dunaj" S & L Assoc. The men present at the meeting and elected as members of the first board of directors were: Albert Vincek, President; John Dluhý, a local retail butcher shop owner, Treasurer; Václav Pešíčka, a fine Czech gentleman and a banker, Secretary; Anton Chorvát, Thomas Griglak (then organist and choir director at St. Michael's), Martin Skorupa (a builder), Joseph Adam, a local tavern owner, and Joseph Tomala (real estate and insurance broker), as directors. Soon after its founding, the parishioners and others in the locality applied for membership in the "Dunaj" in big numbers. The association helped many to save their money and it helped many others to home ownership. "Dunaj" kept growing rapidly every year and in a short span of a few years it was the *second largest saving and loan association in Chicago*, and the *largest Slovak association in all America*, just as St. Michael's parish became the largest Slovak parish in America at that time. In 1931 the association opened its 99th series and its directors at that time were (just to get their names on paper): Joseph Trubiroha, Paul Havlíček, John Dluhý, Charles Tupý, Andrew Valachovič, Matthew Vadovský, Peter Hello, A. B. Suhany, John M. Nemec. For years the association held weekly meetings on Tuesday evening in the basement of the old church, until the time of an attempted hold-up, which, happily, was unsuccessful. But the management of the "Dunaj" decided to transfer it into Depositors State Bank, of which Václav Pešíčka was then president. But "Dunaj" stopped prospering in the bank. It was merely vegetating. Finally, John M. Nemec, an employee of the bank managed to extricate the association from the bank and move it closer to the church, its original location. He housed it in his newly set up insurance and real estate office and he became "Dunaj's" secretary. But even this did not help and did not save the association from demise. Pressure of the Great Depression brought about eventual liquidation and the "Dunaj,"

the daddy of them all, became a happy and revered memory.

"*Gage Park S & L. Assn.*" was organized in February 1921 by Joseph Tomala, who became secretary. Some of the names of officers and directors associated with "Gage Park" in the early years were: Joseph L. Reppa, Michael Černý (a business man), John Slovynec (an architect), John Massura and Joseph Massura (mason-builders), Fr. Šteffek, sanitation, John Bomba, Jr. (a timekeeper), Vincent O. Šnep, Dr. Peter P. Hletko, Joseph Hubalík (insurance agency); John Bomba and others. The first office of the association was at 2650 West 51st Street. It moved to its present location in 1938. The association is now in its 48th year and has assets over 22 million dollars. It pays the highest permissible dividend rate. It maintains a nice office at 2740 W. 55th St. Its present officers and directors are: Dr. Peter P. Hletko, President; Wendell Tylka, Vice-President; Michael S. Rehák, Secretary-Treasurer; John Keblušek, Joseph Hubalík, Joseph Karas and George Galoš are the other directors. All the officers and directors are Slovaks. Office hours are 5 days per week, Tuesday and Friday evenings and till noon on Saturday.

The "*Damen S & L. Assn.*" is another early entrant. It was organized in September and held its first meeting on October 4, 1916. John Gurka, a tavern-owner and later a soft drink manufacturer and distributor, was its first moving spirit, and the weekly meetings were held in the hall to the rear of Gurka's Tavern at 45th and S. Fairfield. It was originally organized under the name "*Slovenská Wlast*" (Slovak Fatherland). When A. B. Tabola became secretary after a few years, he legally changed the name to the correct Slovak spelling, "*Slovenská Vlast*," since the Slovak language has no consonant like "w" in its alphabet. In 1922 the association moved its headquarters into St. Michael's parish hall where it continued for several years, until A. B. Tabola again legally changed the name to "*Damen*" after the street on which his real estate office was located and he moved the association there, later to 51st St., just west of Damen Ave. *Assets are \$13,099,366.00.* Other names connected with this successful association: John M. Kubina (deceased, an undertaker for 50 years, long time President), V. Dobiaš, Štefan Pastyak,

Thadeus Macejak, Joseph Kempiak, all now deceased. Its present officers are: Mary Tabola-Poronský, President; Joseph Judickas, Vice-President; Dr. John Poronský, Secretary-Treasurer; Frank Bohula, Michal Mladučký and Frank Kačmarčík, directors. The association is housed in a beautiful new office at 51st and Damen Avenue. All officers and directors except one are Slovaks.

"National Security" was also an early entry. Organized in 1907 as "Choč" S & L. Assn. For many years it was the "baby" of the late Steve Škríba, Sr., on the west side of Chicago. Later it was moved from S. California Avenue to 26th and Troy St., and eventually to its own beautiful building at 6859 W. Archer Ave. Its assets are over \$12½ million. Office hours are 5 days a week, closed on Wednesday. Its officers and directors are practically all Slovaks: William Škríba, President; Andrew Babka, 1st Vice-President, Joseph Demko, Secretary-Treasurer, and Thomas Chuhak, Ernest Cibira, John Škultéty and Edward Škríba, directors.

Security Federal, organized in 1907. Address: 1209 Milwaukee Ave. Total assets: \$30,042,279.83. Officers are: Sam Šlahor, President; John Janáč, Vice-President; Ivan Kováč, Executive Vice-President; Elizabeth Andrišek, Assistant Secretary. Other directors are: Joseph Žilka, Joseph Šandrik and William Macháček.

"American Home" S & L. Assn. — 3924 W. North Ave. Organized in 1910. Assets \$3,017,391.00. All of its officers and directors are Slovaks: John Bilka, President; Albert Jančovič, Executive Secretary; John Homola, Vice-President; Joseph Peterka, Treasurer. Other directors are: Edward Jančovič and Joseph Flaška.

"Economy" S & L. Assn. is the latest entry. It was organized by Attorney Frank Matavovský in 1949. It owns its very nice office building at 2650 W. 51st St., the original home site of Gage Park S & L. Assn. Assets: \$11,921,865.00. Officers: Frank Matovský, President; Marie Matovský (Frank's wife) is Secretary-Treasurer. Anthony Matavoský (a brother) is Vice-President, George Škodon, comptroller. Other directors: Michael Rusnák, Dr. Wendel Kapustiak (an eye specialist). All the officers and two directors are Slovak. Two additional directors are: D. Varraveto and O. J. VanMale.

"Andrej Hlinka" S & L. Assn., named after the national hero and political leader in Slovakia, Msgr. Andrej Hlinka, P. A., existed for some 35 years at 2234 W. Chicago Ave. The association was managed by Vencel Roth and Š. Velba. Eventually the association was taken over by Oran Menšík and its name changed to City Savings. After some additional 15 years, the supervisory authorities stepped in and began liquidating the institution. Oran Menšík had not applied for insurance of accounts by the FSLIC.

"Hemlock" Federal S & L. Assn., while not a typically Slovak institution as far as the make-up of its board of directors, is managed and supervised by a Slovak, Joseph P. Gavroň, its President. Its assets are: \$40,601,000.00. Founded in 1904 by Czechs. Its office is at 5140 South Ashland Avenue.

"Talman Federal," founded in 1922 by Ben F. Boháč and other Czechs on West 51st St., near Talman Avenue. This association is one of the giants in the industry. Its assets: \$476,209,255.01. Its Assistant Secretary is Joseph Seliga, Slovak. His brother, Emil, was president of the association for a number of years, but later resigned and went to California. The president of "Talman" is Bernard A. Polek, the son-in-law of Ben F. Boháč. Present address: 55th and So. Kedzie Avenue.

Other Slovaks in savings-loan work are: Attorney John Dluhý — in the legal department of "Home Federal S & L., a \$362,000,000.00 institution; Mr. Dluhy was retired recently. J. Batis of Joliet, Ill., with Olympic Federal in Berwyn, Ill., and Miss Irene Kocúr, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer of "American S & L." on West 47th Street. Dr. Joseph Mitrič is a director in Midlothian S & L. Assn.

In the past, two Slovak Savings-Loan associations existed on the West Side — "Bratstvo" and "Ferdiš Juriga". Steve Balek was the secretary of "Bratstvo" but when the depression hit the country, "Bratstvo" went into voluntary liquidation and paid all its depositors in full and ceased to exist.

"Ferdiš Juriga" began having much the same difficulties at that time and it merged with another association, the "Oak", and passed out of Slovak control, despite the fact that a few of the Slovak directors were retained for a while. In that way "Ferdiš Juriga" ceased to exist also.

Joseph Pokora had been the moving spirit during its existence.

"Štefánikova Dvorana" (Štefánik's Court)

Already on December 13, 1899 the Chicago Slovaks held a meeting to organize a "Slovenský Dom" (Slovak Home), a social center, where they could meet, hold lodge meetings and other social affairs. By activity they raised money and soon bought a building on Canalport Street, near Halsted St. There they continued until 1924. This original venture was started by 4 assemblies of the National Slovak Society. Later they renamed the Home as "Národná Slovenská Dvorana" (National Slovak Court). In the meantime, on October 26, 1921, representatives of Assembly 39 Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol met with representatives of the "Slovenská Beseda" for the purpose of discussing the possibilities of erecting a "Štefánik's Court", named after the big Slovak hero, Gen. Milan R. Štefánik, a French general, an astronomer and one of the organizers of Czecho-Slovakia. With again much activity, this group raised money by various endeavors and ultimately built the Court at 24th and S. Pulaski. On January 8, 1925, the original "Národná Slovenská Dvorana" merged with M. R. Štefánik Dvorana. The Štefánik Dvorana contains a large auditorium, meeting halls a dining hall, bar-room, etc. The building houses a 5,000 volume Slovak library, catalogued according to the A. L. A. classification system, which was donated to the Chicago Slovaks by the "Matica Slovenská" (Slovak Institute of Slovakia) and accepted in their behalf by the chairman of the welcoming Chicago committee, Dr. P. P. Hletko. The library, as well as the "Dvorana" itself were a bee-hive of activity for many years. But with balls and dances becoming more scarce in our Slovak community, no stage plays being put on, various lectures or celebrations and banquets also being less profitable whatwith radio, television and motor cars taking over, Štefánik's Court is falling into disuse. Many of our lodges, as well as some individuals hold shares in this venture.

Radio hours

The late Vincent Kalník was the originator of "Slovak Hours" in Chicago when he established one on WHFC in

the early 30's. Then others followed like Eden Radič, Macharek, Lutheran religious hours, the broadcast of the pro-labor group, the Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol broadcast hour, etc. At present Rudolf Reis-Červeň conducts a full hour of Slovak music, songs, news and entertainment every Sunday morning 9-10 A.M. from station WXRT-FM — 93.1 kc.

Chicago Slovaks have two Charitable organizations

The Catholic group has the Katolícka Slovenská Dobročinná Spoločnosť (Catholic Slovak Charitable Assn.) which has been conducting the Catholic Slovak Days for over 33 years. The proceeds accrue to the Charitable Assn., originally organized to conduct charity among the poor of the community, but with the decline of poverty, money that accumulated has been turned over by the Charitable Assn. to the Slovak Benedictine Sisters in Tinley Park, Ill. The Association turned over some \$65,000.00 for the purchase of the original building for the Convent. Additional contributions have also been made. The Association at one time owned a picnic grove with necessary building and accommodations, but the Argonne National (Atomic) Laboratory took over the site. With the proceeds, the Association purchased "McDermott's Oaks Grove" on 119th and Archer Ave. The grove was improved and the buildings renovated and much activity ensued. But with changing times, picnics are no longer being held, the venture is less and less profitable and the Charitable Assn. is considering the selling of the grove. Rev. Richard Škríba is president.

The other group of Chicago Slovaks have their "Slovenská Americká Dobročinná Spoločnosť" (The Slovak American Charitable Assn.), a non-denominational association. They too have been doing charity, but lately they are accumulating funds for construction of an Old Peoples' Home. They have purchased a site for the future home on North Ave., in Glen Ellyn, Ill., some 15 miles west of Chicago.

There is still another group, the Slovak Catholic Old Peoples Home (Katolícko-Slovenský Starobinec) which is raising funds towards building or purchasing a home for our Senior citizens. This group has about \$100,000.00

available for this purpose. Various moves are under consideration, even the possibility of the Catholic Slovak Charitable Assn. and this Old Peoples Home group merging into one joint organization. Their pooled assets might give the proposed Old Peoples' Home a very good and promising start. Both groups are actually composed of the same and identical people and there is very little use to keep the two groups apart. Mrs. Júlia Krajčovič, who originated the Slovak Catholic Charitable Assn., was its President for years, then organized the Starobíneck group and was its President for years. After her recent death Dr. Peter P. Hletko was drafted as President.

Permanent Slovak Theatre in Chicago

Slovak enthusiasts for the theatre have fostered the "Americké Slovenské Národné Divadlo" (The American National Theater) for very many years. It was organized in 1919. It has produced some 250 Slovak stage plays. Some of those active in this undertaking over the years were: Jesenský, Ondrejko, the Lesaks, the Matises, Števková, Lamoš, Matúšková, Letrich, Tibenský and many others. Most of their plays were produced at their "home" — the stage of the ČSPS, hall at 18th and May Sts. With changing times and the loss of national consciousness in the youth, and the departure of the older folks, the need for a permanent Slovak theater died out.

Slovak Days

The so-called "National Slovak Days", conducted by a non-denominational group and back-boned by the Slovak American National Charitable Assn., these "Days" are the older. But in 1931, the Slovak Catholics put on their First Catholic Slovak Day in Pilsen Park, 26th and Albany on October 11, 1931, which turned out to be a huge moral and financial success. The proceeds at that time, in times of the depression, were \$5,100.00 in clear money. These "Days" have been held every year since then, and while some of them in subsequent years were even more successful than the first one, their attraction is also losing out. They have been a source of much money for the various causes of the Chicago Slovaks and the Slovaks of the USA. The "National Days" have been keeping up better

in the last several years than the "Catholic Slovak Days" in Chicago.

Slovak Catholic Cemetery

In the early years, Slovak Catholics were being buried in Resurrection Cemetery, Justice, Ill. (a cemetery serving Czech, Polish and Slovak people), and in St. Adalbert's Cemetery, Niles, Ill., which also served the three nationalities. Those on the very far South Side used their local cemeteries there. On May 30, 1923, the Slovak Cemetery of Seven Dolors was dedicated in Hillside, Ill. It was adjacent to the newly forming diocesan Queen of Heaven cemetery but with the expansion of both cemeteries, Our Lady of Sorrows Slovak Cemetery will soon be a part of Queen of Heaven. Msgr. V. Blahunka was the chief moving spirit in organizing the Our Lady of Sorrows Slovak Cemetery. Across the road (Roosevelt Rd.) from our Slovak Cemetery is the huge diocesan Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Slovak A. A.

For many years, the Slovaks maintained the "Mudroň Athletic Club" (Mudroň AC.) on the West Side. They participated in many sports, but also in social activities. Years later they re-organized and formed the "Slovak A. A." (Slovak Athletic Assn.). The main activity of this club is soccer. They have produced very good, championship teams, and they participated in a soccer league which comprises teams of many ethnic groups—the Poles, the Germans, the Sweedes and others. The club maintains a clubhouse at 27th St. and So. Hamlin for social purposes. The public is invited to their club rooms.

Slovak Newspapers in Chicago

Over the years many Slovak newspapers were founded and published in Chicago. Some had a very short existence, others lasted a long time. Prior to 1900 there was actually no need for a Slovak newspaper, and one could hardly have succeeded since the number of Slovaks here at that time was insufficient to support a newspaper.

The earliest attempt to publish one was in 1902 by one Chudatsik, a controversial character because he had strong leanings towards the Magyars, whom the Slovaks

despised because it was the Hungarian government under which the Slovaks have suffered a thousand years, being denied all rights and privileges of a nation, which forced many Slovaks to emigrate to this country in quest of a little liberty, a piece of bread and pursuit of happiness. Chudatsik with his pro-Magyar proclivities was not favored very much by the Slovaks and for that reason his newspaper, the "Katolícke Noviny" (Catholic Slovak News), and the half dozen other papers which he founded under various names in subsequent years, never found wide acceptance. He began publishing his "Katolícke Slovenské Noviny" on the South Side in the vicinity of 46th and So. Marshfield Ave. The paper was a weekly. Later he founded dailies, publishing some two or even three simultaneously, with the news contents identical in all of them, only the advertizing being different from one paper to the other, thus being a source of revenue. At times some of these newspapers had no circulation and no readers. All his newspapers ceased publication in about 1926. The last known address was 2117 W. Grand Avenue.

"Nové Časy" (New Times) was established at 1702 So. Halsted St. in 1918, after the establishment of Czecho-Slovakia, with which the Catholic Slovak People's party (Hlinka's autonomist party), and most of the Catholic Slovaks became disenchanted. The editor was Stephen Húska. Ceased publication in 1942 because the Catholic Slovaks in Chicago refused to support the paper and to subscribe for it.

"Národný Slovenský Denník" (National Slovak Daily), established in 1913 on Milwaukee Ave., was a pretty serious attempt to establish a good daily in Chicago. Some of its editors were S. Húska, Michael Laučík, then Gustav Maršal Petrovský, John Ferienčík and others. It lasted only four years and ceased in 1917.

"Katolícky Slovák" (Catholic Slovak) was a weekly, established in 1921 by V. Tylka and Louis Kycko at 17th and So. Union Ave. It lasted a few years and was eventually converted into a daily, the "Chicágsky Denník" (Chicago Daily) and moved to St. Michael's parish, at 48th and So. Winchester Ave. It lasted only one year, 1921-22, almost to the day, and failed because the new owner,

Rudolph Pollák, a real estate operator and insurance broker, got himself into a tight financial squeeze in his own private business and the revenue from the daily was not sufficient as yet to bail him out of his own troubles. Dr. Peter P. Hletko, then a college student, was the editor, later M. Božek, Florian Tylka and Rudolph Pollák himself served as assistant editors. The daily was Catholic in its ideologies.

After the "Chicágsky Denník" ceased publication the Chicago Catholic Slovaks felt a big void. They had become accustomed to the services of the "Katolícky Slovák" and the "Chicágsky Denník" and now felt they must again have a newspaper. The Tylka Brothers (Florian and Wendel), operators of a tiny printing shop at 830 W. 18th started publishing the weekly "Osadné Hlasy" (Slovak Parish News) amid much enthusiasm among the Chicago Slovaks, and with the moral support of Rev. Gregory Vaniščák, OSB., pastor at St. Michael's (he is the one who suggested the name "Osadné Hlasy", Parish News). But shortly after the start, Rev. Gregory left for Cleveland, Ohio, to begin his work of organizing the Slovak Benedictine monastery there as its first prior. "Osadné Hlasy" continued and prospered for many years, 36 to be exact, from 1928 to April 1963. Dr. Peter P. Hletko became contributing editor in 1928 and lasted to the end. Florian Tylka was the editor, and when he died, Vendel Tylka assumed ownership and editorship. This was undoubtedly the most successful venture in the newspaper publishing business that the Chicago Slovaks ever had. The paper, through the contacts of Dr. Hletko became an influential force in the life of the Slovaks all over America, not only in Chicago. It should never have ceased publication.

Another void followed the demise of "Osadné Hlasy" in the life of the Chicago Slovaks. The Slovak Catholic Charitable Association sensing the lack of contact among the Chicago Slovak Catholics, decided to help in a small way, and it established and promised to subsidize a small monthly news-pamphlet, the "Naše Hlasy" (Our Voice). It is being published in the Tylka Bros. printery at 2548 W. 63rd St. Much different in its politics from the "Osadné Hlasy," the new paper is totally non-controversial and feeble in its editorial program leadership of its readers.

Other newspapers and publications which have appeared in Chicago over the many years:

"Pravda" (The Truth), a labor weekly, established in 1933. Publishers: Pravda Publishing Co., 1510 W. 18th St.

"Rovnost' Ľudu" (Peoples' Equality), labor, pro-Socialist, later pro-Communist, established 1926, by the same people and at the same address as "Pravda".

"Slovensko-Americký Denník" (Slovak American Daily) established 1904 in the Chudatsik newspaper chain on Grand Ave.

"Slovensko-Americké Noviny" (Slovak American News), another in that chain.

"Slovenské Slovo" (The Slovak Word), weekly, established in 1914. Ceased in 1916. Gustav Maršal Petrovský editor. Publisher Slovak Printing Co., 19th and So. Halsted Street.

"Tatran" (Tatranian), fraternal monthly, was the official organ of the Tatran Slovak Union (a Chicago-based fraternal society), until the organization merged with the Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol of New Jersey. John Matlocha was editor since its beginning in 1916 and it was printed in the Mallý Press Printing shop, 1702 S. Halsted, where the "Nové Časy" had been published for many years.

"Viestnik" (a Slovak monthly) established in 1913 for the parishioners of St. Michael's. Publishers: Hurban Bros. Press at 47th St., near Damen Ave. Editor: Ladislav Hurban. Lasted until 1918 when L. Hurban ceased being organist at St. Michael's.

"Ľudový Denník" (Peoples' Daily), pro-Communist, published by the same people and at the same address as "Rovnost' Ľudu," "Pravda," etc.

"Náš Svet" (Our World) was published on North Ashland Avenue, as a non-denominational weekly for a number of years. Its owner, editor and publisher was John Dend'úr, now in New York City.

"Slovenská Žena" (The Slovak Woman) was a nice, illustrated monthly catering to the needs of Slovak women, but it lasted only a short time. The editor was Mrs. John Dend'úr, and the publisher her husband John.

Slovak newspapermen

Besides the Slovak newspapermen mentioned in connection with the above Slovak newspapers over the years, we now have Slovaks engaged in American newspaper work. One is Ronald Kotulak, science editor of the Chicago Daily Tribune, who frequently writes medical and health articles for the Chicago Tribune. At the annual awards luncheon of the Chicago Heart Association held in June 1968 at the Palmer House, Mr. Kotulak received the meritorious service award. He was cited for his outstanding role in making the public aware of the progress against heart disease and heart association programs and accomplishments. The guest speakers were Jimmy Durante and Jim Conway, radio and television personality. Mr. Kotulak is well known in Chicago and North-West Indiana for his outstanding articles on the latest advancements in scientific research. His late mother, Mary Kotulak was a long time officer of the 403 Branch of the Catholic Slovak Ladies Association branch in Chicago.

John Husar is a sports writer for the Chicago Daily Tribune, covering football games and practically all other sports. He is the son of John 'Firpo' Husar of Chicago, well known for his sports activities at St. Procopius College, Lisle, Ill. and Purdue University. John Jr. also conducts a weekly column in the Tribune called the "Locker Room" on golf topics.

Lawyers and Judges

The Slovaks of Chicago have produced and developed a fine group of lawyers. Most of them are native born. The first to achieve a position on the judicial bench was the late Michael Tremko as a Judge of the Municipal Court. A present day Judge is Judge John Pavlík, a St. Michael's school graduate, University of Chicago law school graduate, elected in Calumet City, Ill., but sitting in the Chicago courts practically every day. We have had two assistant State's Attorneys, Sam Papánek and Rudolph Janega, who is still serving. Judge Louis Hyde (Hajdušek), son of the late Dr. L. J. Hajdušek, is Probate Judge.

Among the attorneys, past and present, we find such names as these: Michael S. Rehák, John Hlavačka, Joseph Hlavačka, J. Hlavačka, Jr., Paul Dolenák, Frank Matavov-

ský, Edward Kerpec, John Škultéty, R. Ptačin, E. Haranta, W. Lesák, John Gološinec, Sam Sušina, Steve Svatik, John Svatik, Vlado Hojsa, Ann Kubíček, St. Schostok, John Dluhý, Igor Kováč, Thos Chuhack, Anton Mikula, Edward Fusek, Joseph Steller (former vice-president of the National Slovak Society), now in Milwaukee, Wis., S. Michuda (was also an engineer and Chicago City Bridge engineer) now out of Chicago, and the late attorneys: Adam Poliak, J. Slifka, Anna Svatik and John Balko.

Physicians and Surgeons

The Slovaks of Chicago are well represented in the medical field with their proportionate share of good, adequate, dedicated and able physicians, who minister well to the health needs not only of Chicago Slovaks but also Chicagoans of all ethnic groups. The first Slovak comers to this city had to depend on various other group physicians for their medical needs and care. Eventually they developed their own as time went on. One of the first Slovak physicians here was Dr. Ďuro Guča on the West Side, an immigrant from the southern part of Slovakia. Soon others—some foreign born, most native born, followed. Thus, the late Dr. Joseph Gazda at 52nd and S. Damen Ave., now his son, Dr. Mace Gazda. Also, the late Dr. L. J. Hajdušek in Town of Lake on W. 47th St., Dr. Raymond on W. 18th St. (his wife is also an M.D.). Dr. Peter P. Hletko (former clinical instructor in clinical neurology at Loyola U. Strich School of Medicine, former Cook Co. Hospital interne); Dr. Paul Hletko, psychiatrist, former assistant Managing Officer of the State Hospital in Monteno, Ill., now chief Medical Officer of the State Welfare Dept.; Dr. Louis Wajay (his wife is also an M.D.), Dr. John Turčan, Dr. Fr. Soltis, Dr. Wendell Kapustiak (specializing in ophthalmology), Dr. Louis Dvotch and Dr. Wm. Dvotch (these two are brothers of Fred Dvotch, the orchestra leader on Broadway), Dr. John Vyboch (an orthopedic surgeon now in Los Angeles, Cal.), Dr. Joseph Mitrick, Dr. Mary Patras (former instructor in Loyola U. Medical School—now she lives and practices in Miami, Fla); Dr. Michael Vanečko (his son is also a physician—the young Vanečko is son-in-law of Mayor Daley); Dr. William Rurik and others.

The following physicians have died: Dr. Raymond Ježišik, Blue Island, Ill.; Dr. Emil Židek, Dr. Martin Šaško (his wife also an MD.), Dr. John Belenský, Dr. L. J. Hajdušek and Dr. Martin Kostelný.

Dentists

Right along with the physicians-surgeons Slovaks in Chicago have a fine crop of capable dentists. We should mention the following: Dr. Steve J. Hletko (former English editor of the Slovak Catholic Sokol "Falcon," now sports director of National Slovak Society, Secretary of the Slovak Bowling Congress and recent president of the Illinois Bowling Congress, a former Lt. Col. of the U.S. Army at Ft. Hood, Texas), Dr. Richard Remijaš, Dr. George Matula, Dr. G. Tilley, three Bunta brothers (Albert, Paul and Joseph), Dr. Michael Rak, Dr. Michael Orth, Dr. Michael Vitek, Dr. Joseph F. Solus and his wife Dr. Eleanor Solus, Dr. Joseph Biel, Dr. Joseph Tisončík, Dr. John Poronský (Secretary of "Damen" S & L. Assn.), and Dr. Daniel Tylka, now practising in Toledo, Ill.

Pharmacists

The drug profession is not quite as well represented as the physicians, dentists and lawyers, but at least the following are known: the late four Leško brothers, Joseph Duleba and his son, Messrs (two) Žibrida (Bernard died since this article was written), Mr. Griguš, B. Menšík and John Miklian on West 63rd St.

The Arts

In the arts the Slovaks here have produced such stars as Mary Halama from the neighborhood of Chicago Ave., and Frederick Sts., an operatic concert singer whose career was rather short. She moved to New York, married and apparently gave up her career. Lillian Michuda from Roseland was a splendid singer and entered the movies. One of her first movies was with Jack Benny, under the movie name of "Lillian Cornell." Other movies followed but she too married and forsook the cinema and settled down. The one real luminary is Frederick Dvornch, a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music in New York. He is an orchestra leader and composer. He conducted the

orchestra for Allegheny-Ludlum Steel in a series of radio musical programs. He also conducted for "Show Boat," "Song of Norway," "Carousel" and other Broadway musicals, both on and off Broadway. Freddie Dvonch is a real talent and an artist, descended from a musical family—his father, a tailor, was a band musician, his uncle, Anton Olách, was a band musician, and Freddie's two brothers, the physicians, were also good violinists at early ages. Freddie has a doctorate in music.

Other good singers are Irene Kocúr and Mary (Škríba) Koyš, who at one time had short season appearances with the chorus in Chicago opera.

Orchestra leaders

Besides many small local bands and orchestras and combos, some amateur, some semi-professional, Joe Pat(erek) has a popular polka band, much like the well-known Frankie Yankovich. They play polkas, waltzes, schottisches etc. He plays Slovak, Czech, Polish and international numbers. He puts on quite an act. One of his parents was Slovak, the other Polish. — Frankie Sloboda is a good violinist, a good entertainer and a good orchestra leader. — Dr. Isidore Mlečko, a chiropodist from Chicago Heights, originally came from Roseland, was much like Frankie Sloboda. But unfortunately he died a short time ago.

Religious orders

The "Our Lady of Sorrows Convent" is the Convent of the Slovak Benedictine Sisters in Tinley Park, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. They branched off the Czech Benedictine Convent in Lisle, Ill. Mother Theresita, OSB., was the first prioress. The present Rev. Mother is Mother Geraldine, OSB. Besides the old convent building, they have a new Convent, built and dedicated only two years ago. Rt. Rev. Abbot Kojiš, OSB., from St. Andrew's Abbey in Cleveland, is chaplain. Chicago Slovaks contribute heavily.

The Slovak Franciscan Fathers in Valparaiso, Indiana, although a short distance from Chicago, are close to the hearts of many Chicago Slovak Catholics and they support the Franciscan Fathers very generously. The Chicago Slovak Catholics hold annual pilgrimages to the Seven

Dolors Shrine on the grounds of the monastery. A new Church has been built there recently.

Old peoples' and nursing homes

The Slovak Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius from Danville, Pa., conduct the St. Cyril Villa, in Highland Park, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, Ill. Some Chicago Slovaks avail themselves of this service. Others support the Villa financially.

The Daughters of St. Francis, a Slovak Sisters Franciscan order, conduct the Nursing Home of St. Joseph in Lacon, Illinois. Many Chicago Slovaks have contributed generously to these Sisters since they came from Slovakia as immigrants and also contributed to the building of the Nursing Home. The home accomodates 50 patients. A new addition is being built to accomodate another 50 patients. Also a new million dollar mother-house. These Sisters also run a hospital in Mountainview, Mo.

Undertakers

Of these, the late John M. Kubina was probably the first Slovak undertaker here. He celebrated his 50th anniversary as a funeral director four years ago, shortly before his death. He was active in many extra-curricular fields, including fishing and bowling (he was President of the Slovak Bowling Congress and savings and loan work, President and Chairman of the board at "Damen S & L."). Many other Slovak undertakers have died here: Sam Kostelný, Steve Kostelný, John Židek (his son is carrying on), Martin Menšík (son is continuing the business), Charles Macháček, Thomas Baroško, John Palenica and John Lattyak. Well known names were also Paterek and John Posuch. Some of those still active today are: John Satala, Edward Tybor, William Macháček, B. Menšík, John Šoltis, Miss Judy Tybor, John Palenica, Jr., and Fred Kubašák, now in California. Edward Dluhý in now in Florida.

Theater Owners

There have not been many of these from the Slovak ranks. In 1913 the late John Remijaš and the late Charles Kobilak teamed up and conducted the theater business in the "Gaelic Theater" on W. 47th St., near Western

Ave. Mr. Kobilak died and Mr. Remijaš carried on, in fact expanded when he built the "Acadia Theater" at 55th and Fairfield Ave. in 1929 and kept both theaters going for many years, even during the depression. He was the father of Dr. Richard Remijaš, a dentist, and father-in-law of Dr. Peter P. Hletko (wife Anna). With advancing years and failing health, he eventually sold both theaters but did not live too long after that. He died in 1947. Both theaters are now converted to other businesses.

Brokers

In the investment field we have at least two account representatives with brokerage houses: Milan Blažek with Francis Du Pont Co., 122 So. LaSalle St., and Godfrey Labda, with Howe, Barnes & Co., 208 S. LaSalle Street.

Banks and bankers

Some of Chicago Slovaks even tried banking as a business, but did not have much success. Perhaps the earliest was John Haluška on the West Side shortly after the turn of the century. He never attained great success, but he enjoyed a good following among his people. Later Papánek-Kováč State Bank operated for a few years at 886 Milwaukee Ave., but the Great Depression took its toll here. It was said that if the supervisory state authorities had not been so quick on the draw and had they been just a little more lenient, the P.K. Bank would have worked out its temporary squeeze. John S. Jurík was perhaps the most successful Slovak banker in Chicago, while it lasted. For years he had been a real estate and insurance broker on West 47th St. near Damen Avenue (then called Robey St.). Eventually he organized the Robey State Bank, on West 47th St., just west of Robey St. The bank enjoyed pretty good success for a long time. The writer of this article worked in this bank for several summers (during student vacations) as a bookkeeper and teller. Just before the depression, Robey State Bank merged with Depositors State Bank at 47th and Ashland Ave. and Mr. Jurík became one of the vice-presidents of the merged bank. Mr. Václav Pešička, former secretary of "Dunaj" S & L. Assn., was the president of Depositors. But the depression eventually cut down Depositors Bank

too, as it did many other banks at that time. So, Robey State Bank and Depositors State Bank vanished off the face of the earth.

Slovak Manufacturers in Chicago

Soon after the Slovaks reached Chicago many of them began looking around and after acclimating themselves started various business enterprises. Many of them started or purchased taverns and at one time this was probably the most profitable business for the Slovaks. Many entered the grocery and meat market business but these ventures, like milk stores or dairies are fading out of the picture since merchandising chains and shopping centers grew up profusely. One outstanding exception is the wholesale dairy owned and managed by J. Žiak and his sons in South Chicago.

Other Chicago Slovaks, particularly those from a town of Brezová, in Slovakia, who brought good experience to this country about tanning hides, these entered the tanning business, wood processing, and manufacturing of other hide products, such as drum heads, belts, brief cases etc. Others brought varied experiences and abilities such as wire workers. In Trenčín county in Slovakia many were wire workers and many travelled all over the world plying their craft. They were called "drotári" and were able not only to manufacture wire products, but were also handy in repairing various objects in the home with the aid of wiring, such as broken pots, vases, ceramic objects etc. Their travel experiences were many and some of them were away from home many months, or even years, travelling from country to country. One of them, a wire-worker by the name of Adam Džudži, told me he travelled extensively in Russia, knew the country well and spent much time in Tiflis, capital of the Georgian Republic. Others knew Baku well in Azerbajdjan USSR.

Let us list at least a few of the manufacturing businesses that the Slovaks owned and conducted in Chicago at one time or another:

Tanners and wool processors

White Eagle Rawhide Mfg. Co., 1652 N. Throop St.
Owners: George Ďurkovič and John R. Janáč. Organized

in 1924. Manufacture of drum heads, banjos, tamborines, children's toys and drums etc. Employed 12 people.

Liberty Rawhide and Tanning Co., 2020 N. Paulina Street. Manufacture of belts and belting. Representative: Steve Nosko.

Krutý and Krutý. Organized 1939. Wool and sheep and goat hide processing. Employed seven people. John Krutý, representative. 1716 W. Webster Avenue.

Vráblik & Co. Organized 1947. Carried on the same business as Krutý & Krutý, at the same address. Employed five people.

Bachar & Mižialko. Organized 1935 by George Bachar and John Mižialko. Later the owners were: John Mižialko, Edward Mižialko and George Bachar. Manager of the business: John Mižialko, Sr. Their business was pulling of sheep pelts and the pickling of sheep skins.

Paul Konečník & Son. Stripping of wool.

Martin Šlahor was in the wool and hide business since 1916.

Samuel Šlahor—in the same business.

National Wool Pulling and Scouring Co. Organized in 1921. President John Svatík (a brother-in-law of Dr. Štefan Osuský, the former ambassador from Czecho-Slovakia to France); Štefan Svatík, secretary, and Paul Konečník, treasurer. Yearly output: 700,000 lbs. of wool shorn, washed and dried. Employed 10 people. 1117 W. Webster Avenue.

F & B Mfg. Co. Owner: John Filko, Cable address: Filko-Chicago. Motto: "The crown jewels of ignition." The firm makes various automotive parts and various plastic caps, tops, and other objects. Filko Ignition—5840 North Northwest Hwy, is a Division of F & B.

John Filko has been in this business for a long, long time. During the World War II, he was the recipient of many government orders and he received government subsidies for expansion purposes and for increasing his facilities for production of necessary work and manufacture.

An interesting sidelight on John Filko and his F & B Co. Many of the products, particularly the plastic items, bear the name of the manufacturer, Filko, or Filko Co. Some years ago, the Philco Radio Company felt that this

was some sort of an encroachment on their name, and they sued to prevent John Filko using this trade-mark.

Many and long, and expensive court battles followed. Filko claimed that this is his family name and he would protect it, and his right to use it, to the end of the world and to the limit of his treasury and all his resources. After extended litigation and appeals in courts, John Filko won out. Besides the lower courts, the litigation went through the Appellate Court and the Philco Co. ran the case up to the Supreme Court of the U. S. But John Filko won his case in all the courts, including the Supreme Court. Defending this case cost John Filko \$42,000.00.

John Filko has five plants, including two in Chicago at 4248 W. Chicago Ave. and Crawford and Chicago Avenue, one in Phoenix, Arizona, and even one in Bogota, Columbia. They manufacture electric parts for automobiles, electrical relays, parts for helicopters and jets for the U. S. Army and Navy. They do many millions of dollars of business every year. John Filko employs 500 people.

John Filko's is a remarkable story. This fantastic success in business is certainly remarkable for a poor immigrant Slovak from Slovakia. This should encourage many of our native born to strive as hard as John Filko did, and while not every one can attain such success through hard work and application without some luck, many certainly can and would, if they go about it seriously and industriously. In World War I, Mr. Filko was a volunteer Czechò-Slovak Legionaire. The Legion helped establish Czechò-Slovakia.

Wire workers

Chillo Mfg. Co. 2106 So. Kedzie Avenue. Owner: Paul Chillo.

Everede Tool Co. 2000 N. Parkside Avenue. Owner: J. Prokša.

Canning, Pekara Inc. Representative: Gustav Pekara, Jr. 1809 W. Webster Avenue.

Philadelphia Wire Lamp Frame Co. 1126 West 18th Street.

Avondale Machinery Works Mfg. Co. 5546 N. Harlem Avenue. Milan Filip represented the company.

Van Dyke Industries. 2259 W. 21st Street. Stephen Židek.

Supreme Wire & Metal Products Co. 317 East 29th Street.

Premier Wire Lamp Shade Frame Co. 1716 S. Michigan Avenue.

Western Wire Works Inc. Michael Martinek and Sons, 951 W. 18th Place. Manufactured various wire products, bird cages, wire cages for offices, elevators etc.

Premier Metal Works, Inc. 1616 Clinton Street. Owner: Andrew Mičjeta, who at one time was very active in Slovak fraternal work.

Wood workers

Arrow Parlor Furniture Frames. J. Havlik. 629 West Cermak Road.

Marček Furniture, Division of Central Parlor Frame Co. Inc. 1311 W. 47th Street.

Olach Furniture Frames, Inc. 2527 W. Moffat Street. Owner: Anton Olách (an uncle of Dr. Frederick Dvornik, the violin virtuoso and orchestra leader on radio, TV and Broadway). Manufactured home furniture, church furnishings, institutional furniture etc. Had a subdivision: Mountainview Wood Prod. Co., Mountainview City, Arkansas. Has retired from this business several years ago.

Other Businesses and Occupations

The Slovaks in Chicago have been engaged in every kind of imaginable business, profession and occupation. While at one time, the saloon or tavern business was most popular, Slovak people have expanded into other lines. P. Kvorka has a large furniture store and so did Emil Arbet and J. Kostolanský. Soltis Radio and appliance store is a large establishment owned by John Šoltis on 51st and Washtenaw now on 55th and South Pulaski Road. John Žáček owns and operates a large trucking and hauling firm, the Fairfield Motors. Emil Arbet also had the Arbet Truck Lines.

At one time, every side street had a grocery and meat market for the convenience of the local people. Now the large supermarkets, and shopping plazas have taken over this business, which even the automobile has made more

accessible to the housewife. Such local retail butchers and grocers should be mentioned as John Bistyak for a very large number of years on 48th and Damen Ave., Joseph Peterka on Iowa St., on the northwest side. John Tybor and Ernest Keblušek has been on the south side. The late Mrs. Pitak was on the west side, so were the Sadeckis. The Turčians were at 24th Street, in Cicero. The Rafáč's on the south side, so were the Bzduch's, and so was Mrs. Panko and the John Pirohar's. Also J. Dluhý, Sr., and Mrs. Oškvarek.

We have also had chiropractors—e.g. Fred Kabana and his wife (now in Daytona Beach, Fla.), the John and Johns (man and wife) and others.

Vendel Tylka and his two sons still operate the Tylka Bros. Press, a commercial printery on West 63rd Street.

John and Mrs. Keblušek, and their two sons, operate a very large and modern Ace Hardware store at 155th and South Cicero, in Oak Forest, Ill.

Tony Pastyak and his wife Florence conduct a restaurant business on W. 63rd St., catering to parties, weddings and after-funeral luncheons. Also cocktail lounge.

Many had retail shoe stores (like Nick Vratánina, J. Jurgovský, Facuna, etc.). Galos is secretary and co-owner of the James Coal Co. on South Halsted Street. He has been in the coal business for many years.

Many are, or have been in the real estate business, or in the insurance business e.g. Joseph Hubalík, Šoltis Realty, Karkoška, Dušan Augustíny and J. Fábry and others.

And we had many in the travel bureau business e.g. Eden Radič, Michael Kaplan, Červeň Tvrďý and others.

Large numbers of Slovak young ladies have become nurses and others devoted themselves to laboratory work. Very many are public school teachers.

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DR. PETER P. HLETKO was the Supreme Medical Examiner for the Slovak Catholic Sokol for some 36 years, from 1927 to 1963. The Youngstown convention of the organization named him Honorary Supreme Medical Examiner for life. He was born in Chicago, Ill., in 1902, attended and was graduated from St. Michael's Slovak Parish school, then attended St. Procopius Academy and College (1915-1921) in Lisle, Ill. The next two years he spent at De Paul University in Chicago and received his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry. From 1923-1927 he attended Loyola University (now Stritch School of Medicine of Loyola University) in Chicago and in 1928 received his Doctor of Medicine degree. He then spent 1½ years interning at Cook County Hospital in Chicago and began his private practise of medicine on December 31, 1928. Some eight months later he was invited to join the faculty of the Loyola University School of Medicine and became instructor in clinical neurology for the junior students in their third year of medical school. He kept this post for a number of years, but later resigned because of his increasing medical practise and other civic and political commitments. He was twice president of the Slovak League of America and is now Honorary Supreme President. At one time he served as secretary of the Supreme Court of the

Nat. Slovak Society and for the last number of years is the President of the Literary Committee of that organization. In 1938 he led a delegation of the Slovak League of America to Slovakia, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland on the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Pittsburgh Pact, in an effort to convince or compel the Czecho-Slovak government to recognize the stipulations of that Pact to yield to demands of the Slovak people for complete equality in the Czecho-Slovak Republic. Starting with the April 13, 1927 issue, he was editor of the "Jaro", a monthly supplement of the "Jednota" for a number of years. The "Jaro" was published for the benefit of the Junior Branch and Sokols of the First Catholic Slovak Union. For 35 years Dr. Hletko was contributing editor of the 'Osadné Hlasy' (Slovak Parish News) in Chicago, writing weekly editorials regularly and also writing such columns of comment and criticism as the 'Iskry' (Sparks) by 'Nitrán', 'Paberky' (Gleamings) and others. For some 39 years he is a director and president of the 'Gage Park Savings and Loan Association' in Chicago, a \$22,000,000.00 plus financial institution. Dr. Hletko is now semi-retired but maintains his interest in this savings-loan association, in the Slovak Catholic Sokol (he is a member of the all-important Executive Committee), in the Slovak League of America and in all matters Slovak and civic.

The United States of America – The Nation With a Purpose

Stephen B. Roman, LL.D.

We know from history that the process man learned, which distinguished him from the animals he hunted, was and still is, the civilizing process of a society. Out of tribes—nations emerged. Their leaders guided them through a life which the civilized man found to be satisfying for himself and his family.

The world went through many upheavals that, in retrospect, we realize were hard evolutionary processes. Man that evolved as an individual endorsed and accepted his first immediate grouping—his family. Later, through necessity, he organized himself into a stronger unit—a tribe. Again, by necessity of hard evolutionary fact, tribes evolved into modern nations.

In Europe and Asia where history has best been documented, we have seen the emergence of powers which tried to dominate the entire world before. And again, we have seen governments which sought to offer the freedoms with which all human beings were endowed as their birth-right. Looking in retrospect, we can analyze those values which enhanced man's progress; and those which retarded most of his efforts. The former, offered the individual a chance to develop the power which were really his to use to his best ability. The latter, *bound* the very energies which a state needs for its fullest development.

At the beginning of the 17th century, events in Europe appeared to stifle the human spirit. The urge, by man, to venture to other areas of the world developed into an exodus to a newly discovered continent—to America. The first American settler yearned for the values which came from his heart and soul, and were nurtured by his intellect. He set about fulfilling his visions with his own might, and the blessing from the One in whom he found his greatest trust—his God.

But, as the honest man proposes and flounders about,

through trial and error, so must *he* use his spirit and his intellect responsibly to reach his goals. Goals which not only prime his inspiration, but become the guide for others to follow.

Guided by their desire to build America free and prosperous, the generations of Americans not only marvelled at the human concepts they were promoting, *but had set a new political philosophy to work*. This concept required a new sense of realism in dealing with problems that were sure to emerge. It was a pragmatic approach in every sense, but one which always acknowledged the Divine Creator in Whose trust the nation was dedicated. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln—and others after them—will forever guide the spirit of free men, not only in the United States but everywhere.

The young nation tried to do a lot, and surely accomplished a lot. The country expanded its horizons, and within its borders accepted the men, women and children who wanted to live in the free and peaceful environment.

However, we see the erroneous effect of the American policy in recent decades, that stemmed from the confusion created by the ideologists, that wanted to set America on a new course.

Though Mr. Roosevelt had offered the greatest freedom of movement and practical affluence to his generation of Americans, which touched the hearts of all the people everywhere, he failed to use that which was his greatest contribution to the American nation—the natural, practical and idealistic approach that had guided America before.

The Second World War emerged as a conflict between strong nations—not so much to gain territorial possessions; but more to impose its national philosophies on weaker nations. We all know the course of history. Where freedom once flourished, people were left to their horrible fate, to endure decades of misery. In my opinion, what should have been the destruction of dangerous ideologies turned out to be the war of interests of national philosophies; and thus, extended the possibility to another major war. The ideological confrontation that we are in constant fear of, can bring our world to destruction, such as no civilization has witnessed before.

During the past half century the world witnessed

several forms of domination, along with expanding colonial empires. Several compromises by honourable men dealing in good faith. But, always the same result. The good intentions on one side would not eliminate the treachery and intrigue on the other. The free world, dealing in good faith, always lost and compromised the principles of freedom and democracy. Tyranny, using its devious ways and forms, always triumphed for a time.

There was no doubt in Hitler's plans to conquer the world. But why were there doubts—doubts that still remain—that Soviet communism seeks to do the same? One sought to enslave man's bodies. But the other, seeks to destroy every vestige of his previous political and philosophical persuasion. To compel him, without mercy, to adopt a form of totalitarian exploitation—body and soul alike.

Why is it then that the nation's leaders, calling upon Divine Providence to lead the world in freedom, justice, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, could not recognize the dangers of confusion, that they were creating by trying to resolve long term problems by expedient means.

As such a close neighbour to your great and powerful nation, you must realize Canada tends to be extra—sensitive to your every thought and action. It is a trite Canadian expression that when the United States sneezes, Canada catches the cold.

That I should be standing here about to discuss the role of the United States in the world today, indicates your awareness of the sensitive and friendly reactions of Canadians to your way of life, and the factors which influence your country.

Why is it that we are unable to ferret out the essence of imminent aggression and its accompanying consequences, before millions of people are compelled to bow to the whim and wish of a tyrannical system?

The hope of mankind was riding high when the Atlantic Charter and Four Freedoms were held as a beacon for man everywhere. But how depressed and low it fell when, in spite of that American ideal, one hundred million people that had known freedom, were placed under communism against their will! How depressing it gets when one action leads to another, and shows that the American ideal of free men everywhere slides into the background! Ravaging

communism emerges stronger and stronger, with complete government apparatus supporting its every move for further expansion.

Must we succumb to the devious schemes of dictators who always seem to be right on time to create confusion and turmoil? Can we not analyze a potential threat to humanity? Can we not offer a solution which would alleviate the situation before it gets out of hand? Before it engulfs man in despair, and leads the entire world into catastrophe?

Ladies and gentlemen, I feel that the title of my comments—A Nation With a Purpose—indicates what Canadians think about you, Americans; and, the position of the United States in the world today.

Many of you must be bewildered by some of the terrible events which have occurred in your nation. By political assassinations, by riots and near anarchy, and by crime. The cynic might say, today, that the United States has lost its purpose.

I disagree violently. I can tell you that most people in the world, disagree.

To most people in the world the United States represents hope; and to many of them the *only* hope, that *their fate* will be changed for the better. The man broken under the abuses of those political and ideological systems looks hopefully—and secretly—to the United States.

I can stand back at a distance and tell you that to men and women living outside your borders, you appear as a strong nation created by pioneers; and perpetuated by ideals of freedom, justice and liberty. Your forefathers were fighting to establish the *uniqueness of the individual* in a society. They worked to help that individual achieve his fondest aspirations—to live in freedom.

Let us not forget the beginnings of your American history. The downtrodden, the beaten and weary came to America from societies where political and social systems had taken away the dignity of man. *From societies that turned man into a lesser creature—than Divine Providence intended him to be.*

The purpose of the American nation was established, from its earliest days; to provide opportunity for men to

be free; to show the rest of the world that only in free societies can man evolve to his ultimate.

Contrast this root of the American culture and purpose, and American history with other parts of the world. The world which is under the domination of what we define as a communist system. In that world, man as an individual is non-existent. Man is only a tool to be manipulated—to be used, by a select few within the power structure.

My viewpoint is, that this essential purpose of the American nation—this constant drive for individual freedom—is the greatest strength which less fortunate man everywhere can look up to, today. Despite occasional setbacks of the American policy, the American purpose remains the only hope of those people who are locked into the communist system and ideologies.

Your nation is the only hope of the free world, if the world, as we know it today, is to survive. The United States is the only nation capable of deterring the expansion of the evil ideology that is so vehemently trying to encircle individual man.

As I have mentioned, this role of champion of individual dignity, and freedom, was thrust on the United States by history. It has taken two world wars to arrive at the present crucial stage of direct confrontation. The confrontation between the ideology of the innate dignity and freedom of man; and, the opposing ideology that man has no basic individuality, but is only another animal to be used, by the state.

Championing individual liberties has become part of your nation's identity. Naturally, this task has never been easy nor always crowned with success.

Two world wars have been fought over fundamental issues which are more relevant today than they were in 1918. The confrontation between the ideology which is used as a mask for enslavement, on one side, and, the ideology that contains freedom, and liberty, and pursuit of happiness of the individual, on the other. *The struggle of these ideologies continues, and this confrontation will go on until free men will win.*

Communism, which might have started with the intention of helping the individual to improve his lot, cannot be defended today as such. Even its own theorists cannot

show that the continuation of that intention is the purpose of the system.

Events and facts show us the grotesque size of this fallacy. For over 50 years Russia, as the core of the communist way, has used all its strength for only one purpose—the imposition of the dominance of its state, and its government, and its ideology on the rest of the world. In other words—for the destruction of freedom and liberty.

The Kremlin leaders try to convince the world that its difficulties stem from a difference in ideas. The true situation is, that the world's biggest problem is a fight between free nations willing to give freedom to all people, on one side; and, Soviet imperialism, on the other.

The Soviet tactics have been terrifyingly successful. The communist area, today, covers one-quarter of the world's land territory, and one-third of the world's peoples.

Why have we permitted this situation to develop? *We have developed this crisis situation because of mistakes both, in the way we think, and in the methods we employ.* Because we have taken our freedom for granted, we have been trapped into making mistakes which have furthered the efforts of communists to dominate mankind. The United States, as leader and mentor, has been unwittingly tricked into fighting the battle between freedom and slavery, *under the rules laid down by the enslavers.*

As your nation rose in stature, and sought to influence the world—it made mistakes. These mistakes were inevitable at times. But the major errors, I feel were the results of confusion and hesitation. It may have been a possible lack of confidence among leading Americans in the historical purpose of the nation. It was almost as if some of your politicians felt guilty, or somewhat ashamed, about words like freedom, justice, liberty, equality—and, phrases like, the pursuit of happiness. You may feel self-conscious hearing them now. I am proud to be free—and able—to use these words.

As your President, Mr. Nixon, stated in his Inaugural Address: "America must appraise her weaknesses". But let me say, the entire world shouts to you to appraise

the weakness of *yours*, and *mankind's* adverseries. And, he also said: "the American dream does not come to those who fall asleep". So must America understand, when the people of the world call on this generation of Americans to awaken from its lethargy and pursue its American purpose.

Yes, no man can be fully free when his neighbour is not.

The purpose of your nation, today, is to recognize the choice between your original idealistic goal of freedom, and self-respect of man, on one side; and, his enslavement by communism, on the other.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, time has passed when international order can be guaranteed by power, alone. A good example of this is the result of the Second World War. I believe, and believe very strongly, that in our world of ideas and ideals, military confrontation will be the end result:—*unless, we are willing, to weaken the enemy by the greatest strength we have at our disposal—the yearning for freedom by enslaved men.*

I, for one, believe that mankind would survive a nuclear war, but *only* as a small fragment of what man and civilization represent today. But, I also believe that the confrontation is not necessary. Re-appraisal of the way to go about strengthening our side, and weakening the adverseries, is an immediate need—and, a high priority item.

We hear a cry from a number of responsible thought-molders in the United States, and some beyond your borders, about the lack of American leadership, on the international scene. It, therefore, become the task of *this generation* of Americans to clearly re-establish that leadership which will capture the imagination of, not only America and the free world, but also the people that are suffering tyranny. Surely American leadership must understand the plight of nations seeking freedom, and inspire them to promote their self-determination.

The indecisions, and hesitancies, and contradictions of our leaders in recent years, have only confused the rest

of the world. They have given ammunition to the communist argument that the United States is an arrogant nation, and not a liberator, and fighter for freedom and liberty.

But, ladies and gentlemen, let us hope that this is in the past. I am heartened by the evidence of realistic thinking about the basic aim and role, of your nation, on the world stage.

I sense a return to the purpose which drives America. The right of the individual to seek—to achieve his aspirations in an atmosphere of freedom, and equality.

What does the world long for today? I am convinced that the solution of the problem is, simply:

First. Establishment of American leadership that will freely entice all the peoples fighting for, and respecting freedom, under its banner.

Second. Re-appraisal of the policy of containment and status quo should be considered. In today's world—status quo—is virtually the same as standing still in our fast-moving world. Therefore, unless the Western nations begin making their own revolution—a revolution to extend and expand the areas of freedom—the free man will not survive as such.

It is indeed time for America to remember the strength and power of the people yearning for freedom in the Soviet system. Only through that particular power can we expect, and eventually achieve, victory of free men without nuclear holocaust. Let our systems compete peacefully. But let the competition be based on equal handicaps.

The test is, to bring to light the real motivating force, and seek to understand its future moves. *Knowledge is free man's most important asset, as well as dictators' greatest liability.* The picture I can see in this kind of competition will not be bleak for our side. The competitive spirit of free man is, today, one of his greatest assets—an asset that will triumph in the end.

The power of free man is the power of America. A power which is unparalleled with any of its adverseries.

Make use of it! Give your youth the visions of conquering man's ills! Stimulate the interest in that power, in the masses of enslaved people! Do this with a courage and zeal that gets the job done, and instills responsibility for the objectives.

Third. It is in your interest, and in the interest of free people everywhere to neutralize communists' two most powerful states—The Soviet Union and Communist China. An elastic and skillful policy towards China on the part of the United States and the free world should be considered.

I would like to stress that nothing is more remote from my mind than backing the political concepts which could lead to strengthening the communist tyranny in any way, even in the smallest country in the world. I am interested in not missing any opportunities that would give the idea of freedom a little time to germinate.

In order to survive, the communist world must keep its people in constant fear and turmoil. It must obtain from its subjects the greatest possible sacrifices. Is it not better then, that two of our adversaries are fighting between themselves, rather than both be left free to fight with us?

I feel the world would not be in danger of a nuclear holocaust if the strength of communism could be diminished by its own inherent, internal weaknesses.

Fourth. The free world's communications media must be committed to developing the strains of understanding which make up the moral fiber of the Western man, rather than inflame the antagonisms which promote conflict.

The ideologists of all dictatorships will be pleased to see America flounder; and therefore, responsible communication is a must. If the best is required of political leaders today; if the highest qualities are demanded of your scientists; then certainly, not any less should be the criteria by which the communicators in the West should be motivated.

Ultimately each must seek the same goal—to *promote the best which the Free Society can inspire.*

Fifth. Expanding your horizons is, indeed, very im-

portant for America today. Think in terms of the future problems that you can surmount, rather than be dismayed by them. Freedom has the same meaning to all people, whether one lives in the United States, in Russia, or in Czecho-Slovakia. It is this concept of freedom which eventually overcomes dictatorships.

Communism carries within itself a seed of self-destruction. Let's nurture that seed for our benefit, and for the benefit of freedom.

Your nation stands on the foundation with the wonderful human goals. The goals of freedom and justice for all—equality of opportunity to achieve one's personal happiness. Your nation recognizes the dignity of man. The United States was formed for a purpose, and *with the purpose, to provide a home whether physical or spiritual for those who love freedom and crave for dignity.*

That purpose is more vital to the world today than ever before. *It is your purpose—your nation's purpose.* And the people yearning for freedom see, in the United States, an irreplaceable leader of their hope and their trust. And I know, that people held down by political and ideological tyrannies are *waiting to hear you proclaim it.*

This address was delivered on February 17, 1969 to Palm Beach Round Table meeting and we are pleased to publish it because of its interesting and timely contents. — *Editor.*

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THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA condemns and unequivocally opposes all forms of tyranny, every form of totalitarian political system. The Slovak League of America has always recognized the Godless philosophy of materialistic Communism for the dread evil and conspiracy against free humanity that it is, as the political system which threatens mankind with utter enslavement and, therefore, has fought resolutely against it in and out of season and, today, is still determined to fight against it with all the means at its command until the dread plague of Communism is wiped off the face of the earth.

This is Slovakia

By Francis Hrušovský, Ph. D.

Slovakia lies along the northern shore of the central Danube, where the eastern slopes of the Alps touch the western slopes of the Carpathian mountains, and its territory covers the northern part of the Danubian basin. Since the dawn of European history, a route has run through the gate of the Danube, connecting the West and the East. This important route was intersected at this very point by several routes which ran from south to north and linked the coasts of the Adriatic with those of the Baltic and North Seas.

According to ancient Slovak legend, evil spirits used to gather at crossroads and there would lie in wait for travelers. Crossroads have always harbored danger, and still do. Therefore the Slovaks erect crosses at intersections, to protect travelers who pass these dangerous places.

From earliest times, nations seeking new homelands have flowed over these routes which intersect along the Danube. Through the portals of the Danube marched aggressive conquerors, and the soil of this land frequently served as the stage for bloody conflicts. The nation which settled in such a bustling spot experienced little peace, continually having to defend itself to keep from being swept away by the raging storms. In defending its life its strength was exhausted, and hence it could not grow and develop as it might have in a peaceful atmosphere where catastrophe is not always imminent.

Precisely because of their country's location, however, the Slovaks became accustomed to danger, learned not to yield to threats, and now know how to endure numerous hardships.

Over the routes which crossed at the center of the Danube traveled not only nations which had no permanent home as yet, but also conquerors lusting for booty and the expansion of their power. At this noisy crossroads between the Alps and the Carpathians, spiritual movements

met and penetrated each other, and these defined the cultural development and progress of Central Europe. All these trends touched Slovakia, fertilized the soil of its spiritual growth, and enriched the life of a nation which had settled this country and occupied it for centuries.

For all the disadvantages resulting from the geographical location of its country, the Slovak nation had this great advantage: it was in constant touch with the trends of European cultural life.

Slovakia has behind it a rich and vibrant past, and the Slovak people have acquired sufficient historical experience to realize not only their position and vital strength, but also the right to their own life in their own ancient homeland.

IN A COUNTRY OF HIGH MOUNTAINS AND DEEP VALLEYS

Life was not easy in a country which for the greater part is covered with high mountains and furrowed with deep valleys. In ancient times, people who had to struggle with Nature for their daily bread with bare hands and primitive implements, sought out the broad plains where the fertile soil required less work and provided them with easier living conditions.

The tributaries of the Vistula River, which flows into the Baltic Sea, and the tributaries of the Danube, which empties into the Black Sea, indicated the route to the passes in the Carpathian mountains, and through these passes people traveled from north to south and from south to north. Through Slovak territory, from the early Stone Age until deep into the Middle Ages, passed a great assortment of tribes, leaving behind in his country material relics of their life and cultural level.¹ Also in the historical period, which in Slovakia begins around the birth of Christ, Slovakia was inhabited by people of various origins who stayed for a shorter or longer time at this crossroads. After the Celts, who left behind in Slovakia their names of the mountains and rivers, this region was occupied by the German Marcomanni and Quaddi. At the very beginning of the Christian era, the central section of the Danube became the northern boundary of the Roman Empire. The Roman legions which had built a string of

fortresses along both banks of the Danube, tried to restrict the attacks of the barbarians to the provinces on the far side of the Danube, and at the same time attempted to conquer the land of Slovakia and thus advance the imperial boundaries from the Danube to the Carpathians. Finally, the Roman emperors themselves had to come to the territory of Slovakia in order to subdue the stubborn Germans who were trying to push deeper into the Danubian basin.²

When, at the end of the 4th century, the Romans had to withdraw from the Danube, and when, subsequently, the German tribes also left Slovakia, the Slavs flooded Central Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Balkans. Hardly had the ancestors of the Slovaks moved through the Carpathian passes into the southern foothills of these mountains when the Danube basin was invaded from the east by the warlike Avars who then held control of Slovakia from the end of the 6th to the end of the 8th century.

At the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries, the armies of emperor Charlemagne broke the power of the Avars, and his successors strove to conquer the neighboring Slovak lands. These battles were waged along the entire Germano-Slovak border and were often repeated especially along the Danube, which was the natural route to the East for the Western population.

It is no wonder that this kind of territory would attract many nations who were seeking new homelands in their search for a safe and peaceful life. When the Slovaks settled along the Danube, there was no longer any available space in Europe which would accommodate new inhabitants. The Slovaks occupied this country when it belonged to no one, and so it was that they found themselves on the western rim of the Slavic world as immediate neighbors of the Germans. The ancestors of the Slovak people attached to this country the destiny of all the succeeding Slovak generations, who, in turn established their claim to this land by the fact that during their more than thousand year history they never deserted or renounced it.

Life in this country was hard, as hard as the rocks of the Slovak mountains and the rocky terrain of their foothills. As a result, the Slovaks had an opportunity to

learn how to work hard, to live meagerly, and to hold firmly to the hereditary land of their ancestors. Only thus were they able to survive all the storms of history and the hardships of life. Above the rocky floor of this country there is always heard the soft murmur of impenetrable forests, and in the quiet valleys echoes the song of lively rivers and swift streams.³ This country with its particular geography pressed the seal of its character into the nature of the Slovak people, who have enough vital courage to wrestle with the hardships of their fate and with their deep emotion manage to find beauty and joy in living even among these hardships.

*IN THE FAMILY
OF THE CIVILIZED NATIONS OF EUROPE*

The external peril which constantly threatened Slovakia at this historical crossroads led the Slovak tribes living along the central Danube and its tributaries to unite and defend themselves with their combined strength. Out of the tiny Slovak principalities a united Slovak state came into existence already in the first half of the 9th century. It was the first organized state in Central Europe.

Simultaneously with this development, Christianity penetrated Slovakia. The first teachers of the pagan Slovaks were missionaries from neighboring Bavaria. By the year 830, during the reign of Prince Pribina, a Christian church was standing in the ancient home of the Slovak princes of Nitra. It was the first Christian church, not only in Slovakia, but in the entire territory of the western Slavs. With the Christian faith, which took root in Slovakia rapidly and firmly, Christian civilization entered the country. In the 9th century, therefore, the Slovak nation was already a member of the civilized, that is, Christian, nations of Europe.

The entire region settled by Slovaks and divided into small principalities was successfully united by prince Mojmir, who ruled the country until the year 846.

His successor, Prince Rastislav (846-869), fully realizing the outward dangers, wanted to provide his country with an internal strength that would be able to resist any attack. In the year 863 he invited SS. Cyril and Method, who completed the Christianizing of the Slovaks,

laid the foundations of Christian education, and sought to establish a self-sustaining church organization to support the political independence of Slovaks. The headquarters of the Slovak princes in Nitra was also the residence of the bishop as early as 879.

Svätopluk (870-894), whom contemporary sources call a king and consider "the most glorious of the Slavonic rulers and almost as mighty as an emperor", extended his domain to include the neighboring Czech and Polish tribes. He waged successful wars against his Western neighbors, maintained diplomatic relations and concluded diplomatic peace treaties with neighboring rulers, safeguarded the independent status of his country, and, in the year 880, placed himself, his country and his people under the protection of the Holy See.

His son and successor, Mojmir II (894-906), stalwartly defended the heritage of his great ancestors against threats not only from the West, but also from the East. By the end of the 10th century, the Danube basin was invaded by the Magyars. In these battles, waged on two fronts, the Slovaks were bled.⁴

Slovakia, at the threshold of the 10th century, lost the conditions necessary for independent development. A great and glorious chapter of Slovak history was ended, but neither its inspiring memory, nor the right of the Slovak nation to liberty and independence, ever faded.

The Slovak nation, at the very beginning of its history, passed the test which proved its ability to govern its own land and keep pace with the development of Europe. Firmly implanted in the great family of civilized nations, it could not be shaken loose later by the pounding waves of historical movements.

A THOUSAND YEARS UNDER A FOREIGN ROOF

The invasion of the Danube basin by the pagan Magyars disrupted the political and cultural development of this region of Central Europe. Marauding bands of Magyars frequently traversed the devastated land of Slovakia and terrorized neighboring countries. Under these circumstances the organization of the Slovak State collapsed, the ecclesiastical management of Slovak territory disintegrated generally, many churches fell victim to destruction, and

the advance of civilization was halted momentarily by the wide-spread ruin. But Slovakia, even after these calamities, was not left a barren wilderness. All the attainments of Western civilization appropriated by the Slovaks in the 9th century and all the spiritual values which they had constructed under their own rules were not to be destroyed by fire and sword.

In the 10th century Slovak territory was no longer organized as an independent state, but neither did it belong to any other government, for there was no established government along the central Danube in those days. The Slovaks lived on their ancient homeland but they had no roof of their own above them to insure their peaceful growth.

In the years 955 Emperor Otto dealt the Magyars a defeat which put an end to their sorties and former manner of life. Because of this blow they were forced to settle down permanently, establish their standing among their neighbors and adjust themselves to their new circumstances. They occupied the central region of the Danube basin and at the end of the 10th century, under the leadership of the princes of the Arpád dynasty, began to build a new state: Hungary.

Sometime around the year 1000 Slovakia became a part of the Hungarian State. The Slovak people did not come into Hungary as a nation defeated and subdued. Exhausted as it was by long battles and devastated by wars, Slovakia had no alternative but to become a member of the new government which had begun to form in the Danube basin. The Slovaks did not enter the Hungarian State empty-handed, dependent upon the favor or disfavor of the new government.

In addition to the territory of their own country, the Slovaks brought into the budding Hungarian State their entire material and spiritual heritage which had survived the tragedy of the Slovak State and the storms of the 10th century. This Slovak heritage served as a partial foundation for the government, the church organization, the economic life and the cultural growth of Hungary.⁵

For a long time Slovakia was the most Christian and most cultured region of medieval Hungary and remained so until the most recent times.

Gradually the entire Danube basin entered the union of the Hungarian State. Although Slovakia did not constitute a separate political and administrative unit in ancient Hungary, its geographical location, its topographical features, its national character, its historical past and its cultural maturity provided it with a special position and a role of its own, even in the framework of the Hungarian State.

From the formation of the Hungarian State until the end of the 11th century Slovakia was a vassal principality. At the junction of the 13th and 14th centuries it was the political and military center of power of the "Master of the Váh and the Tatra", Matúš Čák Trenčiansky. During the first half of the 15th century, in the hands of Ján Jiskra, Slovakia played a role in the internal conflicts of Hungary. From the year 1540, when the Turks occupied a large area of Hungary, and for more than a century and a half thereafter, it continued to become more prominent in the affairs of the Hungarian State.

Hungary never was and never became a purely Magyar state. The Danube basin has always been a living mosaic composed of diversified national units: Slovaks, Ruthenians, Rumanians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Germans. Among these nations and national minorities the Magyars never comprised a numerical majority, but by virtue of their origin, language and character they were strangers to all other inhabitants of the Danube basin. Nevertheless, because of this very fact and because they occupied the most advantageous location in the very center of the Danube basin, they were able to attain the leading position in the State of Hungary.

The ruling families which mounted the Hungarian throne, after the extinction of the Arpáds in 1301, were of non-Magyar origin. The official language until the end of the 18th century was Latin. Furthermore, the culture which developed in Hungary was the common product of all the inhabitants of the Danube basin.

Thanks to these circumstances, Slovakia, even though it did not enjoy the conditions necessary for independent growth, was not menaced in medieval Hungary and retained its individual ethnical character. The vitality of the

Slovak nation was such that not only isolated immigrants of Eastern origin (the Sikuli, Pečenci, Polovci, Kumáni), but also large groups of German colonists who settled in Slovakia particularly during the 13th century, lost their identity in the Slovak surrounding by natural assimilation. The distinctly Slovak character of Slovakia, though frequently imperiled by foreign influences, remained inviolate until the most recent times. The Slovak language thrived not only among larger groups of people in the villages but was heard also in the castles of mighty lords. Not even the cities with their centuries-old privileged German population could withstand the strong influence of the Slovak environment; gradually they too assumed a Slovak character.

A certain Slovak scholar, contemplating the strange fate of Slovakia in Hungary, compared the life of the Slovak nation to the life of the dense forest which covers a great part of the Slovak land surface. Storms can cause much damage in a forest. Windstorms can uproot century-old trees. Woodchoppers can cut down the forest piece-meal. But in the place of the old uprooted or cut-down forest grows a new and strong stand of trees with roots penetrating deep into the earth, between the rocks, clinging tenaciously to the earth which nourishes it.

The Slovak nation is like an indestructible Slovak forest, firmly rooted in its native earth and its age-old traditions.

Only such a nation could survive a thousand years without a roof of its own.

ON THE BOUNDARY LINE OF TWO CIVILIZATIONS

The Carpathians constitute not only the eastern boundary of the Danube basin, but, in the Middle Ages, they formed also the eastern boundary of Western civilization, Roman Christianity and Latin culture. Because this basin is more exposed to the West, it was open to all the cultural trends of the neighboring Western countries. Slovakia's particular position in the Danube basin placed it under the constant influence of Western European culture directly from the west (through Vienna), from the north (via Prague and Cracow), and from the south (via Budín). Byzantine Christianity and Eastern civilization

did make an entry through the Carpathian passes, but its influence covered only the easternmost part of Slovakia.

The military expeditions of the German kings who waged war with the Hungarian kings and the campaigns of the Czech Hussites in the 15th century were a menace to the economic life of Slovakia but not to its cultural development. However, through the Carpathians from the East, even during the Middle Ages, came bands of fierce nomads bringing new dangers to the cultural life of the Danube basin. After the Avars who completely disappeared from the domestic population of the central Danube, and after the Magyars who embraced Christianity and adjusted themselves to their new circumstances, and after the small groups of other Eastern nomads of Mongolian origin, a great calamity was visited upon Slovakia by the Tatars who invaded Central Europe in the year 1241 and devastated some sections of Slovakia. Not only the economic and cultural life of the Danube basin, but also the Christianity of the inhabitants was threatened by the Turks who, following their occupation of the Balkans, extended their power to the foothills of the Slovak mountains after the Battle of Moháč in the year 1526.

Although Slovakia felt the effects of all these attacks and upheavals, it managed to maintain throughout the Middle Ages a close and unbroken connection with Western Europe, and this fact had a determining influence on the economic progress, the social development and the cultural life of Slovakia. This lasting and living contact of Slovakia with Western Europe is attested to by the rich relics of creative art which we find from the western to the eastern boundaries of Slovakia.

The oldest historical remains, relics of the Roman style which dominated in Slovakia until the 13th century, have succumbed to the ravages of time and the devastation of war, or they have been replaced by newer relics; but many are in a state of partial preservation to this day. In contrast with these, there are unusually valuable Gothic relics from the 13th to 15th centuries which testify that Slovakia, at the peak of the Middle Ages, had attained a high level of culture. The parish churches of certain Slovak cities (Bratislava, Trnava, Levoča, Prešov, Bardejov, Košice) are magnificent monuments of Gothic architecture,

and some of them with their rich interior decoration are true museums of Gothic art. Imposing Slovak cities, especially the rich mining centers in central Slovakia (Kremnica—where gold ducats were minted as early as 1333—Banská Bystrica and Banská Štiavnica) and cities in the Spiš region (Spišská Nová Ves, Levoča, Kežmarok), have retained much of their medieval character to this day, proving that a vigorous culture bloomed in these cities in addition to industry, commerce and prosperity.

Nowhere in Central Europe have there been as many medieval castles created and preserved as in Slovakia. They were the headquarters of powerful rulers; they played an important role in political history and in the military defense of the country, and stand as monuments of medieval feudalism and mute witnesses of the fate of a loyal nation. Many of these castles have fallen into ruin with the passing of time; only portions of their stout walls still tower above the rocky cliffs and wooded mountains to heighten the romance of Slovakia's natural beauty. Some escaped destruction and are still intact today. Their collections of historical relics tell the past of the entire region. The Slovak people who lived in the cities and in the villages surrounding these castles for centuries survived not only the feudal lords, but the splendor of their dwellings as well. Interesting legends recall their ancient past and their plight in the shadows of these castles. Slovaks have had an opportunity to learn to believe—as the Slovak adage puts it—that “everything is temporary except God.”⁶

Slovakia was touched also by waves of the cultural movement which had its cradle in Italy: Renaissance or Humanism. This new intellectual and artistic trend entered Slovakia in the second half of the 15th century when Gothic culture was in full bloom there. In Bratislava, already in the year 1460, a university was founded that was to become a center of Humanism. Renaissance architecture developed chiefly in the eastern part of Slovakia, leaving its mark on the construction of Slovak homes.

This cultural movement, which was so strong in the land of its origin—where ancient traditions have always had a home—,was not able to develop more fully either in Central Europe or in Slovakia because, simul-

taneously with the Turkish invasion of the Danube basin, the calm life of the country was disrupted by the Reformation.

Slovakia also became a participant in this new phase of history.

SLOVAKIA AS A BASTION OF EUROPE

Implausible as it may sound, it is nonetheless a historical fact that Slovakia served as a bastion in the bulwark that defended Christian Europe against the danger from the East. It played this role when the Turks were in control of the central region of the Danube basin and were attempting to conquer the neighboring European countries.

Life was difficult for the Slovaks in their mountainous homeland, but these mountains often proved to be their strongest protection. In the endless wooded mountains of their country they had found shelter from the Tatars, and they found in them the same kind of refuge from the Turks. Life in the hills was hard enough, but the proximity of the Turks brought new hardships to the Slovaks. Upon the shoulders of the Slovak people fell the burden of responsibility attending an organized defense against the attacks of the Turks. Plundering bands of Turkish warriors disturbed the population of Slovakia by plunging deep into Slovak territory, against the current of the Slovak rivers, and returning with captives as well as spoil.

In order to resist the Turks and provide sanctuary for large numbers of the population, it was necessary to repair and maintain the ancient castles in Slovakia. This work was done by the Slovaks as faithful subjects. The cities strengthened their defenses, and those cities which previously did not have to be fortified had to erect bulwarks. Even some cloisters in the vicinity of the Turks were transformed into temporary fortresses. To support the military forces which were to fight in the event of a Turkish assault, higher taxes had to be paid. These contributions had to be made by those inhabitants of Hungary who were not in the hands of the Turks—primarily Slovakia. Along the southern border of Slovakia, new forts were erected according to the new military

strategy, and these were to obstruct the advance of the Turks toward the mining cities of central Slovakia.

For a century and a half (from 1540 until the end of the 17th century), Slovakia lived in continual military preparedness and had to bear the tremendous burdens connected with such an abnormal situation. In addition to this, the land of Slovakia provided the stage on which were enacted, first of all, the wars between the antiking, Ferdinand I of Hapsburg (1526-1564) and Ján Zapoľ'a (1526-1540), and, later, the uprisings against the Hapsburgs. These revolts, apart from other reasons, were caused chiefly by the developments of the religious situation stemming from the Reformation and the Catholic Restoration.

The teachings of the Reformation proclaimed by Martin Luther found welcome soil at an early date, particularly among the German urban population, and later spread over all Slovakia. The Protestant Church had a strong organization by the year 1612. In the Protestant centers, schools and publishing houses sprang up and books were printed to spread the new teachings among the inhabitants of Slovakia. However, this movement had hardly gained a foothold in Slovakia when, upon the invitation of the archbishop of Ostrihom, whose headquarters were in Trnava, Jesuits entered the country and began to carry out a zealous program of recatholization.⁷ This activity was centered in Trnava, where a Catholic university was founded in the year 1635. Near the university a large publishing firm was set up to print, in addition to scholarly Latin books, popular writings in all the languages of Central Europe.⁸

Even though these two movements met in open conflict on Slovak soil, and the struggle was attended by various tragic occurrences, the results were not as catastrophic as they were in other countries because the conflict was waged mostly on a spiritual plane—on the floor of the diet in city council—and predominantly with cultural weapons. For that reason Slovakia kept on growing culturally despite these religious disturbances.

Strong traces of this fervent religious experience in Slovakia are found in the numerous and lovely relics of

baroque art. The unusually well-developed period of Gothic art was followed by a relatively weak impression of the Renaissance; but baroque culture spread far and wide and reached a high level in Slovakia. This period is represented by several still extant majestic churches of which the university church in Trnava and the Jesuit church in Trenčín are outstanding for their size and perfection of form. The new style became popular in secular architecture also. Slovak cities took on a new appearance as the wealthy lords left their highly-situated and uncomfortable castles and built their palaces on the plains. Various elements of baroque art crept into Slovak folk art as well. This is evident proof that the Slovak people, while suffering under oppression, retained their deep emotions, their sense of beauty, their creative abilities, and their facility in adapting foreign artistic values to their own taste.

It was not until the end of the 18th century that the religious conflicts came to an end. Protestantism, after its early successes, withdrew into the background, and the Catholic Church regained the upper hand. One important feature of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation was that both parties, in trying to gain the largest number of adherents, concentrated on the use of the vernacular. Alongside official and cultural Latin, the Slovak language begins to emerge and express itself in literary form. And with the revival of the Slovak language, a Slovak national consciousness and a longing for a new form of national life begins to bud, supported by the influx of new intellectual trends.

ON THE WAY TO A LIFE OF THEIR OWN

In the year 1683 the Polish king Jan Sobieski dealt the Turks a defeat, at the walls of Vienna, which marked the beginning of their withdrawal from Central Europe. In 1686 they had to surrender Budín, and by the end of the 17th century they were pushed out of the Danube basin into the Balkans. In these battles against the Turks and their anti-Hapsburg allies, economic misery in Slovakia increased and the social position of the subjugated people became practically unbearable. It is no wonder that the Slovak people saw in Juraj Jánošík—who was hanged in 1713 because “he robbed the rich and gave to the poor”—their

heroic champion and immortalized him and his deeds in legends, songs and art glass.⁹

Hungary was finally liberated from the Turks and unified, but it was devastated, and areas which had been under the Turkish domination for a long time were virtually depopulated. The Slovaks contributed to the reconstruction and elevation of Hungary not only by paying higher taxes but also by leaving their mountainous homeland in large numbers and emigrating to the southern region of Hungary which was more fertile but lacked inhabitants and manpower.

Hungary, in the meantime, developed closer ties with the countries ruled by the Hapsburgs. Charles VI (1711-1740), lacking a male heir, decreed that female descendants of the Hapsburg lineage could succeed him. This was the first law governing all the countries under the rule of the Hapsburgs.

The successors of Charles VI, Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and her son Joseph II (1780-1790), sought to perfect and intergrate the rule of their countries by introducing social, administrative and ecclesiastical reforms in the liberal spirit of current intellectual trends, which, together with other new measures, formed the groundwork for centralization and the beginning of Germanization. These reforms evoked a stormy reaction especially from the Magyars, because they ignored the rights of individual nations and imposed on them the German language instead of Latin.

The new ideas which later, under the slogan "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity", resulted in the French Revolution, made their way into the Danube basin and affected also the nations of that region. These ideas found fertile soil not only among the Magyars, but also among the other nations which occupied Hungary. While the Magyars opposed the centralization of power in Vienna and the attempts at Germanization by the Hapsburgs, the non-Magyar nations of Hungary were preparing to defend themselves against the Magyars whose dream was to eventually build a single Hungarian State.

In the 18th century the Magyars constituted about one-third of the population of Hungary. Next in numerical

size were the Slovaks, who were becoming as conscious of their nationality as the Magyars.

Slovak national consciousness sprang and grew from several sources: besides the contemporary trends of thought entering Slovakia from the outside and the pressure exerted upon the Slovaks by the Magyars, Slovak national consciousness was strongly rooted in Slovak life itself.

The Slovaks were becoming convinced anew that the country which they occupied was their own country and that they were its autonomous inhabitants with all rights of ownership to that region of Hungary. Reflecting this conviction, Ján Baltazár Magin emphasized the rights of the Slovak nation in a book published in 1728.¹⁰

Slovak writers revived the memory of Slovak antiquity, especially the glorious deeds of the Slovak rulers of the 9th century, in order to awaken among their people a longing for a free national future. In this vein, Juraj Papánek returned to the Slovak past in a book entitled *Of Slovak Kings and Kingdoms*, published in the year 1780; Juraj Sklenár, in a book on Veľká Morava printed in 1783; and Juraj Fándli, in 1793, with a revision of Papánek's book. The great events of ancient Slovak history were portrayed in the epic poems of the highly-gifted Slovak poet Ján Hollý, entitled *Svätopluk* (1833), in his book *Sláv* (1834) and in *Cyrilo-Methodiáda* (1835).

With the Reformation, the Czech language spread throughout Slovakia and took root chiefly among Slovak Protestants. But Czech proved to be as foreign and as dead a language in Slovakia as Latin; hence the Slovaks began to cultivate their own language. The scholar Matej Bel-Funtík (1687-1749), in Latin work, wrote of the Slovak language that "in no respect does it fall behind the ponderousness and grandeur of Spanish, the charm and smoothness of French, the loftiness and strength of English, the richness and emphasis of German, the softness and tenderness of Italian, or the imperious sternness of Hungarian." Anton Bernolák, in the year 1787, wrote a grammar of literary Slovak, and later published a six-volume Slovak-Czech-Latin-German-Hungarian dictionary. In the year

1843 definitive rules of Slovak grammar were established, and these then became the instrument of an independent Slovak literature.

As with their language, the Slovaks began to pay attention to the distinctive products of Slovak folk culture, in which they recognized the creative abilities of the Slovak spirit.

All this filled the Slovaks with a feeling of national consciousness and instilled them with courage to win for themselves the rights that belong to people who consider themselves a separate nation and yearn to live as such.

The Slovaks did not forget, but rather remained themselves clearly at this time, that their position on the western border of the Slavic world and their immediate proximity to non-Slavic countries exposed to new perils. They felt that they were not strong enough numerically to defend themselves against the pressure of their neighbors. Therefore, in addition to fostering their own national individuality, they began to take into consideration their relationship to the other Slavonic nations, hoping to find support for the growth of their own life in the great family of Slavs. The idea of Slavic brotherhood found expression in *Slávy dcéra* (Daughter of Sláva), 1824, a poem by Ján Kollár, and in the scholarly work of Pavol Jozef Šafárik *Slovanské starožitnosti* (Slavic Antiquities). These thoughts influenced Slovak national consciousness very much and were re-echoed especially in Slovak literature.

Slovak literature, filled with such a spirit, did not penetrate the large masses of Slovak people who lived in feudal bondage until 1848 and therefore could not take part in public life. Slovak leaders, aware of the situation of the Slovak people, strove to elevate them economically, socially, morally and culturally so that they might be capable of grasping their political rights and assist in achieving a free national life.

In the first half of the 19th century the Slovak people, who for many ages occupied the northern section of Hungary, became a nation which was prepared to go its own way and live its own life.¹¹

POINT OF NO RETURN

Just as the Slovaks had awakened to a new life, had become conscious of their national identity, and were preparing to defend their rights, they found themselves in a strange and difficult situation. They lost that stratum of society whose standing, education and economic independence had given it a leading role in politics as well. The upper and lower aristocracy of Slovak origin, having reneged its Slovak identity, left the Slovak nation standing on the threshold of its new life with large masses of leaderless people. Under these circumstances, the educated sons of the Slovak nation assumed the leadership, combining their struggle for the political rights of their people with a fight for their economic welfare, social elevation and cultural progress. The struggle for liberty was at the same time a struggle for democracy.

In this struggle an unusually important part was played by the clergy, who, by reason of their calling and their constant contact with the people, best understood their troubles and their needs. It should not surprise anyone therefore to see large numbers of Catholic and Protestant clergymen working zealously in every area of Slovak national life and making outstanding sacrifices for their cause.

The writings of the great Slovak poet, the Catholic priest Ján Hollý (1785-1849), inspired his entire generation, the actual leader of which was Ľudovít Štúr (1815-1856), teacher, writer, editor and political fighter. Štúr, together with the Lutheran pastors Jozef Miloslav Hurban (1817-1888) and Michal Miloslav Hodža (1811-1870) established the definitive form of literary Slovak, founded a literary and publishing society, Tatrín (1844), began to print political journal, *Slovenské národné noviny*—"Slovak National News"—(1845), and the literary monthly, *Slovenské pohľady*—"Slovak Views"—(1846), achieved the unification of all Slovaks (1847), and gave Slovak national life a clear goal and a firm direction in the spirit of Štúr's slogan: "Backward We Cannot, Forward We Must!"

"Forward" means to liberate the Slovak people from the yoke of slavery and lead them down the road of independent national and cultural growth to a free nation-

al life. To achieve this goal the Slovak nation needed a political program.

The Revolution which erupted in Paris in February, 1848, and reverberated throughout Europe, inspired a strong movement in Hungary also, affecting the development of Slovak life and speeding the ripening of the Slovak political program. Individual regions of Slovakia rebelled against the imposition of Hungarian as the only legal language and strove to get Slovak recognized as their official language. The language of the Slovak people represented the very existence of Slovakia, and the fight for "our Slovak language" was essentially a fight for all the rights of the Slovak nation.

The foremost leaders of the Slovaks followed carefully the progress of revolutionary activity in Europe and Hungary and decided definitely that the Slovak nation must not stand in the background, gazing passively at these tempestuous changes. They made the necessary preparations in the various parts of Slovakia, and in May of 1848 gathered at the parsonage of Michal Miloslav Hodža in Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš where they drew up a program for Slovakia's political future under the heading "Petitions of the Slovak Nation."

The Slovaks, in creating their political program, took into consideration not only their aims and desires, but existing circumstances as well. One such prominent circumstance was the fact that Slovakia was part of the Hungarian State, in which it did not even constitute a separate administrative unit. The Slovaks were not planning to tear away from Hungary; they merely wished to have the boundaries of the Slovak lands clearly defined so that the Slovak people might have guaranteed equality with the Magyars in Hungary, and that this equality might apply in all areas of political, social, and especially in cultural life. They intended to present these petitions to the King, the Parliament and the Government, but first they wanted the opinion of the Slovak people regarding them and their achievement.

The Magyars, who fought for their own national rights with such determination and revolutionary boldness, opposed the just and justified petitions of the Slovak nation. They outlawed the assembling of Slovaks and

treated their political leaders as traitors worthy of imprisonment.

When the Slovaks saw what obstacles their political program met and would meet in Hungary, they resorted to armed insurrection against the Magyars, who themselves were engaged in a rebellion against the Emperor and were fighting for the independence of Hungary. The Slovak uprising of 1848-49 ended without result. The Emperor, from whom the Slovaks expected understanding and protection, suppressed the revolt of the Magyars with the help of the Russian army, and introduced absolute rule. He punished the Magyars, and completely forgot the Slovaks.¹²

The Emperor failed to crush the Magyars, and the Slovaks likewise refused to surrender their rights. In the year 1860 the Emperor terminated absolute rule and sought an agreement with the Magyars that would not only placate the Magyars but would also not jeopardize the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Immediately in the spring of 1861 the Slovaks renewed their political activity. First they detailed the principles of their political program in the newspapers, and then they called a general assembly to Turčiansky Sv. Martin where the prominent attorney Štefan Marko Daxner formulated Slovak policy anew in the comprehensive "Memorandum of the Slovak Nation." Pointing to the conditions which had developed in Hungary, they asked that the Slovak nation be recognized by a special edict, that Slovakia constitute a distinctive administrative unit in Hungary, and that the Slovak people in their own territory be given the right to develop their own life without restriction.¹³ These petitions were submitted in a separate memorial document to Emperor Franz Jozef (1849-1916) by the noble Slovak bishop Štefan Moyses.¹⁴ All that resulted was that the Slovaks, in 1863—on the 1000th anniversary of the coming of Cyril and Method to Slovakia—were permitted to establish a cultural institution called the "Matica Slovenská" and with their own funds opened three high schools for the training of Slovak youth.

In 1867 the Emperor came to terms with the Magyars, with the result that Hungary gained a wide degree of independence and a decided influence in matters of mutual

concern in the Monarchy. The position of the Slovaks in Hungary not only worsened but grew steadily and unbearably more desperate. By the year 1875 Slovak cultural and educational institutions were closed and Magyarization was spreading throughout Hungary.

Hungary was not a Magyar state even now, but the aim of Budapest policy was to make it such as quickly as possible. The goal of Magyar political ideology was to mold Hungary into a unified state with a population politically unified under one official language. All non-Magyar nations and national minorities in Hungary were to be just "nationalities" comprising parts of a single Hungarian—that is, Magyar—nation.

The Danube basin resembles a large bowl. The center was settled by the Magyars. Feeling strange and alone and numerically weak in their central position, they made every effort to grow and become strong, in order to make their future sure. To do that, their growth had to be artificial and at the expense of the non-Magyar peoples of Hungary. For many centuries a variety of nations and national minorities occupied the rim of this huge bowl, the mountainous regions of the Danube basin. These were pushed toward the center by their growing populations and hard living conditions, thus posing a threat to the Magyars. This interesting conflict to be or not to be was waged in the Danube basin until Hungary ceased to exist as a state.

Feeling the pressure of denationalization at every step, the Slovaks saw danger that threatened them and loomed ever larger above them. Even so, they did not stop stating their allegiance to Hungary, and made several new attempts to achieve a state of equality with the Magyars. All these attempts came to naught because the Magyar politicians, blinded by the alluring features of a future Magyar Hungary, were determined to press their objectives persistently and ruthlessly.¹⁵

The Emperor, who was also the King of Hungary, took no interest in the development of internal conditions in Hungary and was likewise deaf and blind to the situation of the Slovak nation. Because of the election laws and practices which obtained in Hungary, Slovaks either did not get into the Budapest Parliament, or, if they did,

only in negligible numbers. The Hungarian Parliament passed legislation which suppressed Slovak life. Magyarization increased, especially at the beginning of the 20th century. Count Albert Apponyi, as Minister of Education, saw to it that school laws were enacted to bring about the complete Magyarization of all schools in Slovakia. And, of course, the Magyar schools which the Slovak young people had to attend, did not train them in the Slovak spirit nor for a Slovak existence.

If any Slovak in these circumstances dared to defend the honor and rights of his own nation, as did Andrej Hlinka (1864-1938)—called a rebel, a Panslav and a traitor—with such exemplary fearlessness, he found himself in prison, unable to go on with his work. Yet not even these adversities broke the Slovak nation, for the Slovaks believed, with Andrej Hlinka, that “Truth has never yet suffered in vain, nor will our Slovak truth suffer needlessly,” as Hlinka himself prophesied in 1907 as he was being led to prison.¹⁶

- 1) A comprehensive picture of the prehistoric settlement of Slovakia is given in the work of Jan Eisner, *Slovensko v praveku* (Slovakia in Prehistoric Times), Bratislava, Slovakia, 1933.
- 2) Several studies on the contacts of Slovakia with the Romans have been written by Vojtech Ondrouch. He presents a review of these questions in his work *Slovensko v době římsko-germánské* (Slovakia in the Roman-Germanic Period), Prague, 1936.
- 3) Approximately 40% of Slovakia's land area is still covered with forests. In the Middle Ages the forested area was much larger.
- 4) The ancient history of Slovakia is covered by František Hrušovský in his book *Slovenskí vládateli* (Slovak Rulers), Obrana Press, Inc., Scranton, Pa., 1948.
- 5) Pavol Bujnák, “Obrátenie Maďarov na vieru kresťanskú” (The Conversion of the Magyars to Christianity), *Ríša veľkomoravská* (The Greater Moravian Empire), Praha, 1933.
The latest writing on Slovak influence at the beginning of the Hungarian State comes from Juraj Hodál, “Včlenenie sa starých Maďarov do staroslovenského spoločenského zriadenia” (The Integration of the Ancient Magyars into Old-Slovak Society), *Historický zborník* (Historical Review), Turč. Sv. Martin, Slovakia, 1940.
- 6) A lucid study of the history of creative art in Slovakia is found in Vladimír Wagner's book *Dejiny výtvarného umenia na Slovensku* (A History of Creative Art in Slovakia), Trnava, Slovakia, 1930.
- 7) Of the more recent literature on the Reformation in Slovakia, the book by Branislav Varsík, deserves attention, *Husiti a reformácia na Slovensku do Žilinskej synody* (The Hussites and the Reforma-

tion in Slovakia up to the Synod of Žilina), Bratislava, Slovakia, 1932.

The beginnings of the Catholic Counter-Reformation are described by Vojtech Bucko, *Reformné hnutie v arcibiskupstve ostrihomskom do roku 1564* (The Reform Movement in the Ostrihom Archbishopric up to 1564), Bratislava, Slovakia, 1939.

- 8) The origin, history and significance of this cultural institution were memorialized in an anniversary anthology in 1935 under the title *Trnavská univerzita* (The University of Trnava), Trnava, Slovakia, 1935.
- 9) The economic and social status of the Slovak people in the time of oppression is described in the scholarly work of Štefan Janšák, *Slovensko v dobe uhorského feudalizmu* (Slovakia in the Period of Hungarian Feudalism), Bratislava, Slovakia, 1932. Jánošík as a champion of social justice was portrayed widely not only in literature, but also in the creative arts, in music and films.
- 10) The comprehensive monography by A. A. Baník, *Ján Baltazár Magin a jeho politická, národná i kultúrna obrana Slovákov v roku 1728* (Ján Baltazár Magin and His Political, National and Cultural Defense of the Slovaks in 1728), Trnava, Slovakia, 1936.
- 11) The indications of tendencies to turn ancient Hungary into a monolithic Hungarian state are taken up in detail by Daniel Rapant, *K počiatkom maďarizácie* (The Beginnings of Magyarization), Vols. I and II, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1927, 1931.
- 12) Daniel Rapant, *Slovenské povstanie v roku 1848-49* (The Slovak Uprising of 1848-49), Vols. I and II, Turč. Sv. Martin, Slovakia, 1937.
- 13) František Hrušovský, *Slovenské národné shromaždenie v roku 1861* (The Slovak National Assembly of 1861) Turčiansky Svätý Martin, Slovakia, 1944.
- 14) Daniel Rapant, *Viedenské memorandum slovenské z roku 1861* (The Slovak Memorandum of Vienna, 1861), Turčiansky Svätý Martin, Slovakia, 1944.
- 15) František Bokes, *Slovenské pokusy o vyrovnanie s Maďarmi* (Slovak Attempts at Agreement with the Magyars), Turčiansky Svätý Martin, Slovakia, 1944.
- 16) Karol Sidor, *Andrej Hlinka*, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1934, p. 198.

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THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA firmly believes in the American principle of self-determination of all nations, the inherent and God-given right of every nation, whether large or small, to freedom and independence, the right of every nation to freely choose its own form of government and freely elect persons of its own choice by whom it shall be governed.

The Oldest Slovak Newspaper in America

By Andrew Pier, O. S. B.

One of the unique newspapers of the American ethnic press is the "*Slovák v Amerike*" which is now in its 80th year of publication. This historic Slovak journal, at one time a daily, is currently a weekly in Middletown, Pa. Although it has long since passed its zenith (when Slovak immigration reached its peak in the first decade of the 20th century), the "*Slovák v Amerike*," nevertheless, continues to fulfill an essential need for supplying news and views to its readers in the Slovak language in the American tradition of free expression, devotion to democratic ideals, respect for law and order, and in the spirit of the Slovak nation's struggle for political freedom, religious liberty and recognition of human rights for all nations aspiring for legitimate national identity among the peoples of the world and the family of nations under God.

The "*Slovák v Amerike*," presently under the dynamic and capable editorship of Dr. Jozef Paučo, former editor-in-chief of the "*Slovák*" daily in Bratislava (Slovakia), was first published as a 4-page edition on December 21, 1889, in Plymouth, Pa. It is an oddity that Gretshell, who purchased Father Kossalko's printery (where his "*Zástava*" was published for a short time), was a native of Silesia. He became the publisher of the first issues of the "*Slovák v Amerike*" but with the aid of Anton S. Ambrose, a Slovak newspaperman. After an inaugural 4-page edition for Christmas in 1889, the second issue was increased to an 8-page production on January 11, 1890. Its 'Rip a Racik' feature in the Šariš dialect was destined to be a popular and widely-read column for many years.

Ján Gosztonyi, a native Slovak from Prešov, had a press in nearby Phoenixville, Pa. He bought the newspaper in 1890. Ambrose remained as editor for another year when he was succeeded by Fr. Pucher Čiernovodský. Meanwhile, too, a pair of experienced typesetters, Ferdinand Ursíny and Fraňo Rázny, joined the staff. But it was Ján Spevák, a

native of Turiec (Slovakia), who introduced literary Slovak to replace the original Šariš dialect in the newspaper. By the next year Spevák became the sole owner and added a trio of able writers to his staff, namely, G. Maršall-Petrovský, Ďuro Grúnik and Edo Schwartz. Joščák, though not on the editorial board, proved a valuable asset not only as a travelling salesman of the newspaper but as a frequent contributor of interesting articles.

At the turn of the century, the Rev. C. L. Orbach, originally a Polish Jew and a convert to Lutheranism, became the editor. He became a valuable associate of Spevák because of his wide experience, native ingenuity and extraordinary personality, and was to prove more than a match for Rovnianek in the feud that sprang up between the publishers of the "Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny" and the "Slovák v Amerike." In the light of unbiased studies on the subject of their quarrels, the conclusion is that it was not a matter of principle but purely a clash of two strong and hardheaded personalities that caused a misunderstanding and was the fuel for a heated controversy that lasted several years. When Spevák died, Rev. Orbach became editor-in-chief.

During World War I the "Slovák v Amerike" became a daily (1914-1919) but when the war ended it was published three times a week.

Early in the summer of 1935, the newspaper ceased publication, but by the end of the summer it was back in business again as a semi-weekly. As late as 1947 it had as many as 10,000 subscribers under the editorship and management of John Scíranka. By 1952, however, largely due to an unfortunate recurrence of a policy of dissension, the circulation decreased to less than 3,000. Father John Lach of Whiting, Indiana, came to the rescue and assumed publication in Chicago, Ill. in that same year. In 1958 he turned it over to Philip A. Hrobák, editor of the *Jednota* (in Middletown, Pa.) and national president of the Slovak League of America. Upon the death of Hrobák in 1964, Dr. Paučo assumed the responsibility of publishing the oldest Slovak newspaper in America.

Over eight decades 'the editorial life span' of the publishers and editors has been surprisingly brief. But

what is even more amazing is that the newspaper survived all this time considering the frequent changeover in personnel and leadership. As might be surmised, the policies changed, sometimes radically, but the basic principles and fundamental program of serving the Slovak readers in the true spirit of religious and national culture remain to this day as the guidelines of an editorial policy that has as its self-same goal today:

"Cultural enlightenment and spiritual uplifting of Americans of Slovak origin through the American way of life by an American newspaper in the Slovak language."

In view of the Slovak nation's continuing struggle for survival as a united people, the "Slovák v Amerike" has adopted as a supplementary program the following:

"In harmony with the American tradition of Freedom and Independence, the "Slovák v Amerike" champions the right of the Slovak people to the re-establishment of their own National State."

The following list of editors, who at one time or another directed the publication of the "Slovák v Amerike" from 1889 to 1969, comprise most of the talented Slovak newspapermen in America: Ambrose, Pucher, Grúnik, Spevák, Rev. Orbach, Kadák, Joščák, N. Bielik, Rev. Novomeský, Maršall-Petrovský, Anton Bielik, G. Pivko, Albert Tholt-Vel'koštiavnický, Adolf Tvrdý, Ján Čulen, Karol Štiasny, J. Galbavý, J. Baran, Dr. Norbert Čapek, L. O. Kozár, J. Stermenský, J. Zajac, Ivan Križan, Edo Kováč Jr., Štefan Kroner, Ján Scíranka, Rev. John Lach, Ján Okál, F. Hrobák, Dr. Jozef Paučo, Draga Paučová.

In paying tribute to all above pioneers and their successors in the long line of newspapermen who served their Slovak countrymen with devoted zeal and determination, it is with a deep sense of gratitude that we bow our heads in their memory, for their contributions, as the great Slovak journalist, Konšto Čulen, declared, "helped to make America richer culturally, socially and spiritually."

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THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA promotes a better understanding and appreciation of the Slovak nation, its history, culture, traditions, achievements and its long, hard struggle for freedom and independence.

The Place of Slovak Among Slavic Languages

The western world has many hazy notions, unfortunate misconceptions, and erroneous views about the proper place of Slovak in the family of Slavic tongues. To a marked degree, these views were craftily shaped by the systematic propagandizing of various administrators in the Prague government which in the 1918-1938 period sponsored one theory of Czech philologists with such fanfare and publicity that a well-meaning and easily persuaded audience in the West often did not recognize propaganda as such; specifically it did not distinguish the difference that exist between an advertised theory—one that had been examined and decisively controverted a long time ago—and the true state of affairs.

Let us review a bit of this.

Toward the close of the nineteenth century, there was a school of Czech philologists (Gebauer, Vondrák, Pastrnek, and somewhat later, especially after 1918, Vážný, Trávníček, Hujer et al.) that undertook popularizing the idea that the Slovak language is just a dialect of the Czech, or more conveniently to their purpose, just a dialect of the "Czechoslovak" tongue. It is not our intent to analyze the circumstances surrounding the origins of their theory or the contrived propaganda used to promote it; neither are we going to examine the inadequate linguistic backgrounds or the scant understanding of the Slovak language that characterize some of the supporters of this theory; nor shall we consider the political motivation of their efforts. It is the idea itself that concerns us here.

A theory of this kind was again fondly argued somewhat later—during the period of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1938, and was handily used as a theoretic substructure to support the movement of Czech domination over the Slovaks; specifically, it was their "scientific" justification for the attempt to czechize the Slovaks. A typical example of such pseudoscientific assumptions adopted by some Czech scholars was the study of Professor F. Trávníček:

"Czechoslovak relationship based on language considerations" (the periodical *Bratislava* VII, 1933, pp. 217-234), which endorse the recommendation that the Slovaks adopt Czech as their literary language—or put it directly—that they become czechized. In the interim between the two world wars, Czech officialdom not only sponsored the theory of the so-called "Czechoslovak" language through home and foreign publications, it also used every means to make the theory a reality, to impose its adoption.

Note the trend even in such matters as this example: In 1938 Dr. Ján Stanislav, who is at present professor of the history of the Slovak language at the university of Bratislava, wrote and prepared for publication a Slovak grammar. By official restriction (and this as late as 1938!) the work was subjected to a change of title: Czechoslovak grammar (Prague-Prešov, 1938), and the author was advised "to heed the instruction guides that were issued here between the two wars for the teaching of the Czech and Slovak language in intermediate schools." In the spirit of this directive, the author was further required "to compile a parallel history of the Czech and Slovak language" and to publish it within the theory of the "Czechoslovak language." (cf. J. Stanislav, *Dejiny slovenského jazyka*, I, Bratislava, 1958, p. 21). Knowledgeable scholars like Boris Unbeggan (cf. *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris*, XXXIX, pp. 151-152), who doubtless was unaware of the fact that in the Czecho-Slovak Republic scientific research must conform to inflexible governmental controls and directives in order to make even an intermediate grammar suited for high school adoption, validly criticized the author for an unorthodox position concerning a "Czechoslovak" tongue.

The unsavory proposition about a "Czechoslovak language" was formidably opposed not only by Slovak scholars but also by linguists of other Slavic nations. From as early as the nineteenth century Russian Slavists (O. Bod'anskij, Izmail Sreznevskij) regarded Slovak as a discrete language. Gebauer's theorizing (cf. primarily his *Historická mluvnice jazyka českého*, I, Prague-Vienna, 1894) was convincingly refuted by Timofej D. Florinskij, Professor of the university of Kiev and one of the outstanding Russian Slavists of the nineteenth century, specifically in his opus *Lekcii po*

slavianskomu jazykoznaniju (Part II. Petersburg-Kiev, 1897, pp. 220-344). In this study Professor Florinskij emphatically rejects Gebauer's thesis that Slovak is a dialect of Czech, and he amply demonstrates that Slovak justly has its own identity and place in the family of Slavic tongues along with Czech, Polish, Serbian, Croatian, Russian and other Slavic languages. The Soviet philologist A. M. Šeliščev defends a similar position in his book *Slavianskoje jazykoznanije* (I. Moscow, 1941).

The renowned Slovak grammarian and philologist Samo Czambel championed the south-Slavic character and orientation of Slovak as well as its absolute distinction from and non-dependence on Czech (cf. such works as Czambel's *Slovenská reč*, I, pp. 29 ff., and *Slovenská reč a jej miesto v rodine slovanských jazykov*, 1906). He supports the conclusions of his research with weighty proofs for the position that Slovak does not belong to the class of west-Slavic languages but that it is rather of the south-Slavic branches. Up to the present time, this thesis of Czambel has not been either universally endorsed nor definitely and conclusively disproved. (On this subject consult the following authorities: Štefan Kniesza, "Zur Geschichte der Jugoslavismen im Mittelslowakischen," *Etudes slaves et roumaines*, I, Budapest, 1948, pp. 139-147. J. Stanislav, "Juhoslavizmy v strednej slovenčine," *Slovenská reč*, XV, 1949-1950, no. 2, pp. 37-45.)

This position of Czambel is accepted, for example, by the Ukrainian philologist P. Buzuk (*Narys istorii ukrain-skoj movy*, Kiev, 1927). In his book *Istorija na bulgarski ezik*, I, 1919, the Bulgarian linguist B. Conev uses a number to excerpts paralleling Slovak and Bulgarian passages to indicate the south-Slavic, and even the specifically Bulgarian characteristics of the Slovak manner of expression. This kind of common bond between central-Slovak and the south-Slavonic languages is also pointed out by the Polish linguist Z. Stieber ("Jugoslavizmy w dialekcie środkowo-słowackim," *Lud sławianski*, Cracow, 1930, I 2 A, pp. 230-244).

There are language scholars of the West who are fond of calling attention to the similarities and kinship between the Czech and the Slovak languages. It is true, for example, that some western-Slovak and Moravian-Slovak dialects

represent the transition to Czech and are apparently closer to Czech than to any other Slavic tongue. Yet let it not be forgotten that by the same token there are east-Slovak dialects that figure the transition from Slovak to Polish (cf., for example, Czambel, *Slovenská reč*, I, 1, p. 29). Czambel upholds the view that this speech is really a form of Slovakized Polish; Stieber (*Stanowisko mowy Slovaków*, 1937) maintains that it is a dialect produced by a mutation of Polish and Slovak.

Among the newer Slovak linguists who more recently brought conclusive proof that Slovak is definitely a discrete language, we have such scholars as Dr. Ľudovít Novák (*Jazykovedné glosy k československej otázke*, 1935, pp. 71-93) and Dr. Henrich Bartek ("Príspevok k dejinám slovenčiny," *Sborník literárno-vedeckého odboru Spolku sv. Vojtecha*, roč. III, vol. 1-2, 1936, pp. 37-117). See also the Polish Slavist Stieber (*Stanowisko mowy Slowaków*, pp. 15 ff.). Dr. Novák writes that the Slovak language is "a lingual product of very ancient origin but it has a distinctively original and independent evolution of its own, wholly unallied to the Czech. Today's central Slovak is a direct organic continuation from the proto-Slovanic speech that was proper to that region."

Dr. Novák further stresses the point that the linguistic distinction of central Slovak "began evolving far back in the primeval ultra-Carpathian fatherland and continued even in the domain of mid-European territory" and that "central Slovak developed separately and independently."

After World War II, the official Marxist department of linguistics and philology in the Czecho-Slovak Republic abandoned the theory of a "Czechoslovak" tongue affirming that such a proposition is scientifically unsound and untenable. "Officially" it endorsed the thesis that Slovak is a distinctive language in the family of Slavic languages (cf. Jozef Kirschbaum, "Contemporary tendencies in Slovak philology," in *Slavic and East European Studies*, vol. IV, no. 3-4, p. 13, Montreal, 1960).

Interestingly, every year brings a rather significant number of books translated in the Czecho-Slovak Republic from Czech to Slovak and conversely from Slovak to Czech. Anyone who is sufficiently interested in this subject can pursue it further by examining the list of titles published

annually by the UNESCO "Index translationum." And inasmuch as social life and relations within the state require of some people an easy and ready acquaintance with both tongues, a number of Slovak-Czech and Czech-Slovak dictionaries have been published. (Cf., for example, Jaroslav Nečas-Miloslav Kopecký's *Slovensko-český a česko-slovenský slovník rozdílných výrazů*, Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, Prague, 1964, 512 pp.) Although this Nečas-Kopecký dictionary lacks a great number of words whose Czech form is totally different from Slovak and are essential in every-day contacts and communication (e.g., *klebeta*—Cz. *pomluva*; *metla*—Cz. *koště*; *pohár*—Cz. *sklenice*; *žemľa*—Cz. *houska*, etc.), still it deserves the close study and examination of western promoters who naively accept the notion retailed by Czech propaganda about the "affinity" of Slovak and Czech.

It is true that Slovak-Czech and Czech-Slovak dictionaries were compiled at an even earlier date (e.g. F. Frýdecký-P. Kompiš, *Průruční slovník česko-slovenský a slovensko-český*, 1919; J. Kubín, *Slovník česko-slovenský*, Prague, 1920; P. Tvrdý, *Československý diferenciální slovník*, Trnava, 1922; J. K. Garaj, *Průruční slovník diferenciální a synonymický*, Turčiansky sv. Martin, 1937; M. Kálal, *Slovník z literatury a nářečí*, etc.). Recently there appeared a new dictionary compiled specifically for military usage (*Česko-slovenský vojenský slovník*, The Ministry of National Defense, Prague, 1962, 350 pp.).

All this, however, by no means indicates a final halt on the part of the Czechs to czechize the Slovaks and their language. At the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, the learned journal *Slovenská reč*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1966, pp. 82, 105, 106, 107, 112 carries reports of a number of Slovak linguists exposing the pressures to which the political administration had resorted in order to coerce these scholars to introduce Czech words into a large Slovak dictionary then in preparation. Leaders holding top positions in the so-called "age of the cult of personality" advocated a movement of assimilation. In Slovakia this movement is characterized particularly by intensified Czech terrorism in the effort to occupy Slovakia. Writing in *Kultúrny život* (no. 39, 1964), a communist periodical published in Bratislava, the communist writer Michael

Chorvát thus characterized this effort: "As far as eye can see throughout the socialist world, the crest of the rule of the personality cult falls short of total decline in verbal creativity. With us in Slovakia, however, over and above this situation there are also other distinct matter that once and for all ought to be made clear, Though all the social sciences were influenced by the cult of personality, none yielded to this movement as readily and as completely as did Slovak officialdom's department of linguistics. Incredible as it may seem, in this period it actually revived the decadent anti-marxist theory of Czecho-Slovakism, a product of the Beneš-Pražák day. Where champions of the personality cult promoted offering 'fraternal help' in place of liquidating the Slovak nation, there official linguistic circles substituted for liquidation of the Slovak language the expression 'an approximation of Slovak to Czech'."

These attempts evoked passionate resistance not only among Slovak linguists but on the part of all Slovak public as well. Especially repugnant and detested were bilingual—Czech and Slovak—radio and television programs, and this reaction of non-acceptance came from both Slovak and Czech audiences. Czech viewers and listeners understood Slovak broadcasts poorly; for the Slovaks there was an added aggravation since Czech is to them first and foremost the language of an overlord element that must be resisted. It is interesting to note that the Czech Milan Šimeček observed in the Czech *Literárne noviny* (Prague, February 26, 1966) that "bilingual broadcasts are a definite aspect of lingual schizophrenia."

The Bratislava *Kultúrny život* of November 25, 1966, no. 48, p. 6 makes the following commentary concerning this wrangle: "Consider the problem of our bilingual broadcasts. The Prague studio, for example, requires the television films of Saturday and Sunday to be dubbed in Czech exclusively, explaining that viewers complain because they do not understand Slovak. This objection can be raised validly by the Slovak audiences as well, charging obvious difficulty with Czech." The paper further observes that "every cultivated nation has its rights to dubbing and therefore there must be a perspective of reckoning with the eventual dubbing of adult films into Slovak as well. It becomes a serious situation in the domain of films for cine-

ma. The poor attendance which Czech lands and Moravia report at Slovak films is attributed to the comprehension problem—among other factors. For this reason, dubbing Czech onto Slovak films is now under serious consideration.”

Dr. Andrew Kubina

translated by Sister M. Martina Tybor, SS.C.M.

The Slovak Dictionary of 1648

The discovery of a Latin-Magyar-Slovak dictionary published by the university press in Trnava in 1648 brings proof that a Slovak literary language existed in Slovakia as early as two hundred years before Anton Bernolák, the scholar who codified Slovak grammar in 1787.

The earliest listing of this book is found in Csery's catalogue of books published by the Trnava university press (*Historia C. R. Scientiarum universitatis Pestiensis*, fasc. III ab anno 1641-1660). It is dated 1648: "Typographia in domo S. Adalberti in platea Pistorum collocata est, et expressit: Vocabularium Ungarico-Slavico-Latinum. Tyrnaviae 1649 in 8°." In his study *A Bibliography of Slovak Writings* compiled in 1946, Ján Mišianik called attention to this entry in Csery's account. He concluded, however, that the dictionary itself had not been preserved since he was not able to find it anywhere.¹

Finally this work, so significant in the field of Slovak letters was most fortunately discovered by the eminent historian Msgr. Ján Pöstenyi, a papal prelate, who had searched long years for some trace of it. In 1967, with the help of devoted scholarly friends, he had the good fortune to come upon it in the library of Brno university. The volume is titled "Verborum in institutione gramatica contentorum in ungaricum et sclavonicum translatio. Secundum ordinem Alphabeticum, Tyrnaviae Typis Academicis, per Philippum Jacobum Mayr, Anno 1648."² The words "Monasterij Rayhrad" are written in ink on the cover of the book. Apparently the book originally belonged to the Benedictine library in Rajhrad. This fifty-page dictionary with words recorded in Slovak is the oldest known Slovak dictionary.

Latine.	Ungaricè.	Slavonicè.
Segniter	restül, tuniául	leniwie.
Semel	egyszer	geden raz.
Senatus	tanach	rada.
Senatus consultum	tanach végezes	radni wipowied.
Seneſius	vínſég	starost.
Senſus	érzékenſég	miſt.
Sentio	érezem, vallom, velém	cúim.
Seorſum	küiüm, magán	naſtranu.
Separatim	idem	idem.
Sepelio	el temietem	pochowawam.
Sepio	beſövényezem	obhrazugem.
Seps	ſövény	plot.
Seps	merges kigyó	gedowiti had.
September	ſzent mihály hava	zazi.
Septuaginta	14. latos	14. lotu.
Sequor	közetem	naſſedugem.
Sermo	beſzed	recz.
Sero, is.	hintem, vetem	ſegem.
Sero, as.	be lakatozom, zárom	zamikam.
Serpens	kigyó	had.
Servitus	ſzolgalat	zluzebnoſt.
Seſtertium	három pénz	trypenize.
Sextans	negy latos	4. loti.
Sicut, ti.	amint, mint ſzinte	gak, gakoſto.
Sido	le ſülledék	prep adam ſa, dolu kladem.
Signifer	záfzlo tarto.	zaſtannik.

Why was it not possible to find this work in Slovakia though it had been published in Trnava? One ready explanation can be found in the train of a host of events that took place within Slovak borders in the period 1536-1711 when invading and rebelling armies were finally subdued. All this era was marked by wars, disorders and rebellions that erupted in almost every alternating decade and succeeded one another with only brief respites to mark off one episode from the next. The armies of these insurgents destroyed the libraries housed in monasteries and castles; as a matter of fact, they spared not even the private book collections of parish priests. In these upheavals, the territories of present day Czech and Moravian lands were not so seriously threatened as were the lands of the Slovaks and the regions of the Danubian basin. Because of these inauspicious conditions here, it was Prague and Brno that at this time attracted men of learning and culture and encouraged them with the support and promotion of publishing houses and libraries.

Yet in spite of all these hardships, the university of Trnava did bequeath to the future a goodly number of works that had been printed in the prime years of its existence 1635-1777, even though these publications are all too often not found within Slovakia proper. Researchers and scholars can find them more readily in Czech and Moravian libraries today.

Msgr. Ján Pöstenyi deserves recognition and credit for his indefatigable efforts to trace this priceless book which brings proof positive that a literary Slovak language existed even long before Bernolak.

The accompanying photostatic copy of p. 43 of this dictionary indicates that the words bear the characteristics of western Slovak and that many of the expressions favor the linguistic traits of central Slovak.

Unfortunately, the title page of this work does not record the name of the author—compiler of the dictionary.

Fr. Bartholomew Koltner, O. F. M.

Translated by Sr. M. Martina Tybor, SS.C.M.

- 1) Msgr. Ján Pöstenyi, "Spomienka na trnavskú univerzitu," in the magazine *Duchovný Pastier*, April 1967.
- 2) Peter Ratkoš, "Svedectvo národnej kontinuity," in the periodical *Kultúrny život*, July 1967.

Slovak Pioneers in America

DR. ALEXANDER DIANIŠKA

(March 21, 1867-November 9, 1923)

Alexander Dianiška who played a significant role in Slovak-American life was born on March 21, 1867 in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. Affluence was not the lot of his parents but the very lack of material wealth and well-being only disposed them to cling to God and abide by His commandments all the more faithfully. In this spirit of filial fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, they reared their son who was a precocious boy. From the very outset of his formal schooling he applied himself to learning with marked talent and zest, and as a youth of about high school level he gave unmistakable evidence of his Slovak consciousness and undeviating loyalty to his homeland—a gift that came to him from his parents.

The intermediate school which young Dianiška attended in Banská Bystrica was controlled by Magyar and Magyarone professors bent on a program of alienating Slovak students to the Magyar cause. Dianiška was not won by them. He had been an outstanding student in all his classes and graduated with distinction. His final examination earned a special award for excellence and was sent to the educational ministry in Budapest as a model of meritorious achievement and exceptional quality.

Yet aside from this deserved academic recognition, Dianiška did not fare well; his national convictions disturbed the authorities. He was Slovak enough even to be one of a group who chose to make sacramental confession in Slovak. When the Rev. Joseph Martinček, another patriot, for the first time heard Dianiška confess in Slovak, he marveled that a student of the Banská Bystrica intermediate school had the spirit and the daring to defy the professorial overlords of the school who had absolutely proscribed the use of Slovak. The overjoyed priest invited the youth to stop for a chat at the rectory, and from a chance religious encounter there developed a life-long friendship, Father Martinček deepening and strength-

ening in the younger man his already deep-rooted Slovak devotion.

Together with Father Martin Kolár, Father Martinček took special interest in the future of the gifted Alexander Dianiška especially after learning of his desire to become a priest. Both clergymen conferred with Canon John Juriga of Ostrihom, urging him to find practical means of enabling the young man to realize his aspiration. In time, and despite repeated obstacles, it did become possible for Dianiška to launch his theological courses at the seminary of Ostrihom even though his acceptance restricted him to the status of an extern student.

As an externist, Dianiška roomed with four other Slovak theology students, one of whom was Ferdiš Juriga. Just at this time the Magyar journal *Budapest Hirlap* launched a new attack on Slovak students and inveighed against the seminary at Ostrihom as a nest of Panslavism. Father Martinček hurried a warning note to Dianiška advising that the Slovak loyalists be circumspect and even put into temporary hiding all the works of Vajanský and copies of the literary periodical *Slovenské pohľady*. But the communication never reached Dianiška because it was intercepted. Only in a personal interview with the prefect of the seminary did he learn that Father Martinček had written him. The Magyar professors then investigated the Slovak student group and Dianiška as well as Aloysius Vladár, also a theology major, were dismissed. John Donoval (a Slovak poet who wrote under the pseudonym Tichomír Milkin) was severely reprimanded and all but dismissed.

After this setback, Dianiška returned to his hometown and went directly to Father Martinček who secretly sheltered him for a few days. The distraught young student eventually found the courage to approach his father who was in a dying condition. In a voice that could not hide great feeling and anxiety for his father's advanced illness he explained what had happened to him at the seminary and awaited his father's reaction. "Be the Slovak that you have been up to now; God will not forsake us," was the brave father's only observation to his suffering son.

Alexander was worthy of his father's expectations. Father Martinček found him another sponsor and pro-

tector in the person of Canon Majovský and it became possible for him to complete his theological courses at Banská Bystrica where he was ordained a priest on July 5, 1889.

Because he wished to pursue advanced studies, the newly ordained Father Dianiška began to prepare for a doctoral degree in sacred theology. He had no prospect of enrolling as a regular university student because his ordinary rated him as a dangerous pan-Slavist and subjected him to repeated transferrals from one curacy to another. In spite of all difficulties and obstacles, however, the young priest did achieve his goal: a doctoral degree in theology granted by the University of Vienna with a special citation for excellence. But this only whetted the rancor of the Magyar and Magyarone forces, and the thorny way of the young ardent priest grew more and more forbidding and impossible. It now became his lot to be assigned to the most impoverished and all but destitute curacies of the diocese. Father Martinček understood clearly and with undeniable conviction that if Dr. Dianiška had only reneged his Slovak loyalties and had offered his talents at the service of the alien political powers, he would have been promoted not only to the rank of canon but even to the dignity of an episcopal position.

In the thirteenth year of his priestly ministry Dr. Dianiška was named administrator of the parish at Brezno. Commissioner Répaszy of the Zvolen County with calculated deliberateness told Dr. Dianiška that this parish would immediately become his permanent pastorate if he would do as simple a thing as pay him a brief visit and denounce "panslavism." Dr. Dianiška rejected the offer as he would spurn a bribe; he would not forswear his nation. He made no visit to Commissioner Répaszy; he went, instead, to Lopej to see Father Martinček.

Two staunch friends, two staunch patriots—they had little need for circumlocutions or prolonged conference. Father Martinček's fate was much like that of Dr. Dianiška. They sang the heart-rending lament "Hojže, Bože, jak to bolí . . ." and Dr. Dianiška left Slovakia for the United States. The year was 1903. He gave his adopted country twenty years of illustrious priestly service until he died at Mercy Hospital in Wilkes-Barre on Nov. 9, 1923.

Dr. Dianiška's American assignment was a pastorate at St. Stephen's parish in Plymouth, Pennsylvania, and it was here that he spent the remainder of his life. "His wisdom, kindness, apostolic zeal, and fatherly concern in a short time transformed this struggling Plymouth parish and made of it one of the most efficiently organized parishes in the diocese" was the deserving appraisal expressed in the eulogy by Dr. Dianiška's lifelong friend, Father Martinček.¹

As St. Stephen's pastor, Dr. Dianiška had the church artistically decorated. He also procured a new organ, built a rectory, provided a convent, and constructed a fine school. He became the vital spark that activated all the local fraternities and organizations, and under his aegis they prospered and flourished and contributed notably to the vitality of parish life and of Slovak-American life in general. His exemplary priestly involvement deeply affected the flowering of spiritual life in St. Stephen's parish and it is largely to the credit of so zealous and worthy a pastor that this parish gave the Church eight priests as well as fourteen Sisters in the Congregation of the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius. The name of Dr. Dianiška will be eternally associated with St. Stephen's parish.

In 1903 the Slovak priests of the Scranton diocese founded the Treasury of St. Anthony, a priestly society to further in the younger Slovak generation vocations to the priestly and religious life. It became one of the key agencies in founding the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius. And Dr. Dianiška was one of the seven charter members who sent invitations to the preliminary conference that resulted in the establishment of this Treasury of St. Anthony. He was also close to Father Jankola in the early trying days that marked the origins of this religious congregation. It was specifically Fathers Matthew Jankola, Andrew Pavčo, Alexander Dianiška, and Joseph Murgaš who in the spring of 1909 presented to Pope St. Pius X, through the mediation of Bishop Michael Hoban of Scranton, Pa., the petition for authorization to found the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius. When the Holy Father granted this decree of approval, the first religious

congregation of Slovak Sisters in the history of the Church became a reality.

A reading of the minutes of the Treasury of St. Anthony reveals that on more than one occasion Dr. Dianiška was the leading force in activities to be undertaken and that he consistently supported the efforts of Father Jankola to have the Community preserve and deepen its Slovak character.² Because of his natural endowment and moral integrity, the Treasury of St. Anthony entrusted to Dr. Dianiška many responsible offices. He was, for example, a member of the examining board that screened applicants to the congregation of Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius and he was also on the advisory board that was to assign Sisters to their specific apostolates.

In the light of contemporary thinking on Church renewal and adaptation it is noteworthy to observe that Dr. Dianiška was in advance of his age, for he strongly advocated that the laity also be involved in the Treasury of St. Anthony. Although his efforts in this direction were fruitless, for his motion to admit lay members were consistently voted down, his contemporaries often recalled how Dr. Dianiška made it a practice to develop intimate ties with laymen even in other situations. He was especially interested in cultivating church organists, and both Dr. Dianiška and Father John Porubský effected practically a distinct Slovak institution of these professionals.

One who reads and studies in the light of history must naturally make some observations about the position which Dr. Dianiška took when the leadership of American Slovaks broke into camps and this split was patent even in the ranks of the Catholic clergy. From beginning to end, Dr. Dianiška stood firmly at the side of Father Furdek and Father Jankola. "A rich and warm friendship as well as a bond of common effort and co-operation both in religio-ecclesial as well as in socio-cultural and national spheres bound him to the late Father Furdek and Father Jankola. These were three mighty pillars in our national and religious structure in America," wrote the journalist-patriot Joseph Hušek.³

Efforts were started to bring into the leadership core of American Slovaks some persons whose instability and

prone to toward Magyarone associations would have shaken the very foundations of organizations already established. Such a trend could have also jeopardized other groups that were still in their early organizational stage. Among the clear-eyed guardians of untained patriotism was Dr. Dianiška and it was especially at the meetings of the Treasury of St. Anthony that he unflinchingly and uncompromisingly took action to safeguard the purity of spirit and principle that characterized Slovak organizations. It was he, for example, who in 1911 together with Fathers Furdek, Jankola, and Porubský saw to it that only persons of proven worth be at the helm of the Sdruženie Slovenských Katolíkov (Association of Slovak Catholics) which was viewed by many priests as a concurrent offshoot of the already fully functioning and proven Treasury of St. Anthony.

Although the labors of Dr. Dianiška were rooted first and foremost in his own assigned parish and within the sphere of Catholic organizational circles, it necessarily followed that his name eventually became a kind of talisman of universal Slovak exchange in all cultural and national movements of any significant dimension.

Dr. Dianiška's peers are agreed that a career in science would have been his readiest road to self-fulfillment. He had the potential, the attraction, and the qualifications for it; however, his apostolic ministry became his all, for he was—before all things—a priest. Yet he did not deny his American Slovaks a legacy from the heart; he bent his gifted spirit to writing on spiritual themes.

His outstanding achievement here is an admirable translation of Goffine's masterpiece titled *Postila*. "But his writing interests were not limited to this one type of subject," wrote Joseph Hušek. "He also produced cultural and political essays and articles glowing with national awareness. These excelled in aptness and directness of expression, precision and clearness, and a sense of logic that brooked no appeal. Whatever he wrote, he wrote well. Whatever he said, he said well, ex cathedra. His authority was generally recognized even beyond Slovak borders as the theoretics of a man of thought who was also a leader. Because of his lack of adaptability, practically an inflexibility or intransigence, he did not

become popular — in the ordinary connotation of the word—with his younger colleagues, but because of his innate sterling character, his learning and nobility of spirit he won esteem and prestige among all those whose lives he touched, even his adversaries.”⁴

Dr. Dianiška was a patriot par excellence. His was a quiet and unobtrusive quality of devotion to the fatherland, the kind that did not seek the publicity of pretentious functions and the acclaim of broadcast honors, still there were few others in his period of Slovak America to whom as many seekers came for counsel and exchange of views concerning cultural and national interests as the countless numbers that had recourse to Dr. Dianiška.

As Father Martinček often affirmed that Dr. Dianiška could have become a bishop in his younger years had he given up the allegiance he bore his own nation, so Joseph Hušek believed with quiet but unavailing hope and anticipation that the new regime after World War I would recall Dr. Dianiška to Slovakia and there see him honored with the dignity of the episcopacy. This would have been a deserved reward and compensation not only for Dr. Dianiška personally but also for all American Slovaks since it was in their midst that he found refuge and a more serene way of life than had been granted him within native boundaries. But it was a fruitless expectation. The new government only suspected Dr. Dianiška of every questionable motive and wrong possible but it never admitted or conceded that he had qualifications to distinguish him as a bishop. He was (they implied) a monarchist and therefore an enemy of the new state that had risen from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

This was a gross untruth. Dr. Dianiška had demanded for Slovakia only those rights which the vast majority of American Slovaks were demanding through their representatives, the signers of the Pittsburgh Pact, who stood firm in their position and defended both the letter and the spirit of the compact. Dr. Dianiška “knew no pretense,” Joseph Hušek recalls, “and for this reason he made no secrets of his dislike for the current ruling system in Czecho-Slovakia because of its anti-Catholic and anti-Slovak bias. And he did not hesitate to express himself on this score with undisguised and unmitigated bitterness.

This made him suspect of being a monarchist. It reality he was not. The writer of these lines had ample opportunity to convince himself of this thoroughly. Dr. Dianiška did not on principle oppose a republican form of state government, but he did want to see the rights of the Catholic Church and of the Slovak nation guaranteed within the framework of such a government."⁵

The case of Dr. Dianiška is only another instance of the tragic experience that befell Slovak leaders from the pre-Uprising days—strong souls who had to leave for America because the political climate and the ruling powers did not care to favor them with the chance to use their talents, their intellectual endowments, their training and education and various other potentials within the confines of Slovakia, their own native country. A worthy gifted Slovak had to leave Slovakia which needed him more sorely than did any foreign territory to which he was forced to migrate. In a pioneer age, however, the free land of America could not provide adequate conditions for the full and satisfying use of such talents as those of Dr. Dianiška. It could not offer situations most conducive to the flowering of such gifts since the masses of immigrants needed these leaders in a different capacity and they, bound by service to their people, did not desert them even at the cost of sacrificing distinguished careers and rewards that would have been available if they had devoted themselves discretely to their particular professional fields—science, theology, philosophy, technology, or whatever the individual major talent happened to be.

Dr. Alexander Dianiška, the son of Slovak parents of ordinary stock, came a long way and rose to eminence as an unsung hero of the spirit; his name is inscribed in perpetual memory in the annals of American Slovaks.

- 1 *At the Bier of Dr. Alexander Dianiška* (Nad rakvou Dr. Alexandra Dianišku), *Jednota* (weekly), Nov. 28, 1923.
- 2 "Rev. Joseph Murgaš moves that the Sisters teach their classes in Slovak. Rev. Alexander Dianiška seconds the motion, specifically enumerating that these be the subjects taught in Slovak: 1) Christian Doctrine 2) Slovak reading 3) Slovak grammar 4) Slovak composition 5) History 6) Slovak geography 7) Church music at the direction or recommendation of the local pastor 8) Children's stage plays and presentations, suited to the situation and the circumstances of each particular school. Unanimously

carried." Minutes of the regular meeting of the Treasury of St. Anthony, July 25, 1912, Pittston, Penna.

3 Alexander Dianiška, *D.D., Jednota*, (weekly), Nov. 14, 1923.

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

Cf. also Joseph Paučo, *Matthew Jankola, Priest and Patriot* (Matúš Jankola, kňaz a národovec), Danville, Pa., 1959.

IGNATIUS GESSAY

(June 17, 1874-August 12, 1928)

In the little town of Tvrdošín, Orava County, the Gessay family of small means brought up a son who became a leader of no small stature. He was born on June 17, 1874 and chose teaching as his life's career. The Magyar school system of his day was geared to extinguish in him the very last spark of national consciousness, but the choked glow managed to burst into a glorious vital flame fanned by the spirited journalism of the magazine *Dom a škola* (*Home and School*) published by Karol Salva in Ružomberok. Shortly after this revitalizing experience, Ignatius Gessay became a co-worker on the daily *Kresťan* (*The Christian*) which was managed and edited by Edward Šandorfi, a zealous Catholic Slovak priest in Budapest.

Like too many another patriot of his day, Gessay was tracked by Magyar officials who labeled him a "Dangerous Panslav" and forbade him to write any more contributions for Slovak publications. Like too many others who were unmercifully hounded before him and after him, he found the situation more and more unbearable as time went on, and finally he decided to leave Slovakia, the land of his birth, in order to find a free country for uninterrupted and unhampered work on behalf of his nation. He came to the haven of America in 1898.

This was a time of prime need among American Slovaks for qualified and available professionals in all walks of life. Gessay's first stopping point was at Olyphant, Pennsylvania, where he used his talents as a Slovak teacher. But the keen organizer and leader, Peter Rovnianek, with his astute sense of discernment for excellences among men, readily discovered Gessay and offered him a position in the editorial offices of the *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Novi-*

ny (*American-Slovak News*). This was in 1900. For a full decade Gessay worked under the immediate direction of Rovnianek. In 1910 he became editor-in-chief of the *Slovenský denník* (*The Slovak Daily*) and then editor of the *Národné Noviny* (*The National News*), the official organ of the Národný Slovenský Spolok (*The National Slovak Society*).

In 1914 Gessay assumed editorship of the *New Yorkský Denník* (*The New York Daily*) but a year later he founded his own journal *Denný hlas* (*The Daily Voice*) which he managed successfully for three years. But this did not exhaust his rich editorial capacity. He next became editor of the first Slovak magazine for student groups in America—*Mládež* (*Youth*) and he also managed the official magazine of the Slovak League in America, *Nové Slovensko* (*New Slovakia*).

Ignatius Gessay was one of the most distinguished, most diligent and most productive of Slovak editors in America. At the same time sincere and cordial ties bound him also to Slovak-American fraternal organizations whose foremost concern then was the welfare of immigrants to America. This association with fraternal and organizational life also provided Gessay with excellent opportunities for a further exercise of his manifold talents. His initiation into this direct interaction with large groups of people united in fraternal bodies involved largely within the framework of the Národný Slovenský Spolok and brought him very close to the heart and inner workings of extensive cultural and national movements on American soil. He became one of the pillars of this first Slovak national society in America. As a matter of fact, the NSS is indebted to Gessay for founding its youth division *Kruh Mládeže*, a project he inaugurated because he had the insight to realize that an organization will survive only with great difficulty unless it is nurtured by younger forces coming to it through a juvenile membership body.

Ignatius Gessay also played a prominent part in the founding of the Slovak League in America. The preliminary groundwork for this organization was undertaken by the Association of Slovak Journalists when Rev. Stephen Furdek invited Slovak newsmen to attend a conference in Pittsburgh on December 21, 1906. Specific invitations

were sent to the following newspaper offices: *Slovenský Denník* (The Slovak Daily), *Jednota* (the official organ of the First Catholic Slovak Union), *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* (The American-Slovak News), *Slovák v Amerike* (The Slovak in America), *Slovenský Hlásnik* (The Slovak Herald), *Slovenský Sokol* (The Slovak Falcon), *Bratstvo* (Brotherhood), and *Svedok* (Witness). These were the contemporary press agencies that served the Slovak reading public and supported the Slovak cause. They all answered the invitation by sending representatives to the conference except *Bratstvo* and *Svedok*. Both of these however, pledged support and gave assurance that they would endorse the decisions of the conference.

The purpose of the deliberations at this first conference of Slovak journalists was this: "that having taken into account all the persecutions and injustices inflicted upon our nation and upon the champions of its cause in our homeland abroad, we initiate action on the part of all American Slovak patriots for the spiritual rescue of our nation across the sea."¹

The assemblage agreed at once to found an Association of Slovak Journalists in America and they voted the following individuals into office: Rev. Stephen Furdek, president; Rev. John Porubský, secretary; Ignatius Gessay, treasurer. The new organization further decided to sponsor in key American-Slovak centers a series of public protest demonstrations (*Indignačné schôdze*) in order to publicize their condemnation of "the oppression of our people on native territory, and specifically to denounce the inequitable sentencing of our national leaders Rev. Andrew Hlinka and Rev. Ferdinand Juriga."²

These newsmen were well aware that it would not be enough to project only Slovak-contained demonstrations; important as these were, it was even far more important to put before the English-speaking public the scope of some of the injustice and wrongs perpetrated upon the Slovak nation, upon its outstanding leaders and prominent citizens. For this purpose an English brochure was planned, specifically to expose the farce of the Magyar court trial of Andrew Hlinka, and an initial printing of 15,000 copies of this pamphlet was ordered.

This 1907 program of public protest meetings held in twenty American cities alerted not only American and European Slovaks but also the American public at large. Keynote speakers at the programs included American as well as Slovak lecturers. The gatherings and activities were covered by reporters of all the Slovak press agencies and, more importantly, by American newsmen too, with the result that "American dailies and journals set themselves to writing about the Slovaks and their cause more prolifically than they had ever done before."³

The Slovak League in America is the offspring of the Association of Slovak Journalists, for it was conceived at the second gathering of the Association held in Pittsburgh on April 4, 1907. This conference was attended by representatives from all the Slovak journals and newspapers as well as by delegations from all the Slovak organizations in the United States. The gathering unanimously agreed to convene "a mass meeting of all Slovak loyalists living in America in order to lay the foundation for a single organization working in solid and unified cooperation for the most efficient promotion of our national endeavors."⁴

This became no mere meeting; it developed into a grand convention that was held in Cleveland on May 26, 1907, and it was under these auspices that the Slovak League in America was founded. The Association of Slovak Journalists appointed the following to form a committee for organizational preliminaries for the prospective League: A. S. Ambrose, Ignatius Gessay, Gustav Maršall-Petrovský and Rev. Stephen Furdek.

At the founding congress of the Slovak League in America, Ignatius Gessay represented the *Slovenský Deník* (*The Slovak Daily*).

But this was really just an initiation into the rich national and cultural activity of this extraordinarily productive and vigorous Slovak intellectual. Gessay was the first Slovak of academic stature to undertake visiting all the American Slovak settlements in order to gather first-hand data for a history of the Slovaks in America. In 1910 he toured and studied practically the entire U. S. East and Midwest, assembling notes and gathering every bit of

available material that he considered relevant for his projected historical account. It is most unfortunate that he never actually compiled all this significant research into the finished product that he had envisioned. It is also highly regrettable that this collection of invaluable data (like too many other priceless memorabilia) is now irretrievably lost.

Imbued with love for the written word in Slovak and a devotion for values of the spirit in general, Gessay undertook a movement which he called "Four books for a dollar." He knew that as worthwhile reading serves to educate man, so the Slovak immigrant family would find its horizons of spirit and intellect broadened by good reading, and this benefit would, in turn, dispose American Slovaks to advance readily in their new country and to overcome many of the limitations that either deliberately or accidentally barred their way toward better things. If Gessay had enjoyed deserved support in this one effort alone, the American Slovaks of today would be able to pride themselves on an enviable book market and a most flourishing publications enterprise.

Ignatius Gessay found himself in the front ranks of every national movement. When the notorious Magyar Count Albert Apponyi arrived here in 1911 with the intent which he publicly proclaimed in New York: to set afoot intrigues against national groups and to leave them crushed beneath his heel,⁵ Gessay drafted and effected successful and wholesome counter-strategy. The American Slovaks resolutely used the forum of the press and of public assemblage to make known to the world their repudiation of Apponyi's tactics and objectives. Gessay, on his part, took the lead in keeping the American press adequately informed concerning the position and the attitudes of the Slovaks. As a result, American newspapers and journals carried almost daily reports about the justified resistance of the Slovaks not only to Magyar politics and the wave of Magyarization abroad but also to Apponyi's propagandizing in this country. The English-speaking world was being honestly informed.

Similarly did Ignatius Gessay in 1914 take an intrepid lead in exposing the true nature of another Magyar count's

visit to America. This time it was Count Michael Károlyi who flagrantly vilified the Slovaks and hoped to reap from the American government the support of American dollars. Gessay at once saw what was to be done. He personally drew up an English draft of a direct Slovak appeal which disproved Károlyi's allegations and revealed the true nature of the visitor's intent. Copies of this appeal to defend truth and justice were delivered to American newsmen and journalists. They effected a much desired and widespread publicity for the Slovak cause and evoked appropriate reaction.

It can be said of Gessay that he was one of the first Slovaks in America fully to understand the need for presenting to the American public the true state of the Slovak problem abroad. His English exposé of Károlyi, channeled through the arteries of American journalism, forced the unscrupulous count to leave America as a foiled schemer: The American Slovaks in this instance scored a triumph, and Ignatius Gessay—as a recognized leader among them—had every right to take personal satisfaction in this successful issue of a formidable problem though he did not look for personal glory.

During World War I, Gessay was close to the vital pulse of every Slovak undertaking in America. He participated in the preliminary conference that led to the signing of the Cleveland Agreement. He was close to General Milan Rastislav Štefánik when Legionnaires were being recruited in America from among those not subject to the Selective Service Laws.⁷ He served as a war correspondent and in Cleveland and the surrounding areas he was very active in organizing the Legionnaires.

As the war effort mounted toward a climax of victory, so did the endeavor of American Slovaks also wax stronger to secure guarantees of freedom for the Slovak nation. Here, too, Gessay satisfied his obligations as a devoted son of his native country. Since the original Association of Slovak Journalists fell into a hiatus of inactivity, the deliberations of the Slovak League in America established a Society of Slovak Newsmen on April 13, 1917, and it entrusted the office of president to Ignatius Gessay.

Almost immediately after this, American Slovaks

launched the famed Million Dollar Drive and Ignatius Gessay was one of the leaders who became most enthusiastic about this undertaking. Its gratifying outcome testifies that the drive was in capable and worthy hands. The entire project, as the Slovak League in America had conceived it, maintained but one goal: "to promote action for attaining Slovakia's self-determination and independence."⁸

True, this independence was envisioned within a coalition structured as a Czecho-Slovak federation and it was also accepted as such within the provisions of the Cleveland Agreement and the subsequent Pittsburgh Pact. Ignatius Gessay had been one of the signers of the Pittsburgh Pact and one of its staunch defenders.

In 1918 Gessay founded the magazine *Nové Slovensko* (*New Slovakia*). A year later he traveled to Paris to attend the peace conference. From there he went to Slovakia and then returned to report to the Slovak League in America all his experiences on this trip. It was at this time that he decided to return to Slovakia and take up permanent residence there, and he lost little time between decision and reality. He made his home in Bratislava where he set up an information center, trusting that it would become a liaison medium between Slovakia and the Slovaks living in America. As he had ever in this country dedicated his journalistic and organizational talents to the service of immigrants, so now in Slovakia he worked with great compassion and understanding on behalf of those who became returned emigres. Slovaks who returned to their native land after some period of emigration found him willing and resourceful "to help in procuring licenses, offices, positions, and property. And he was always animated with utmost concern that they become more and more closely bound to their homeland again."⁹ For the proper orientation of this segment of Slovak citizens, he founded the periodical *Americký Slovák* (*The American Slovak*).

The crowning achievement of Ignatius Gessay was his founding of the Slovak League in Slovakia in 1920. In this undertaking he put to use his host of experiences in the United States, adapted the constitutions of the

American League to fit the home situation and with apparent relish and enterprise he ventured upon this new pioneering. As he had noted in America the alienation and isolation of many of his countrymen who were unattached—without a parish, a school and the possibilities of becoming involved in organizational life—so in Slovakia he readily grasped the fact that entire Slovak areas on the border fringes were in danger of suffering a telling severance unless help reached out to them without delay. He oriented the Slovak League in Slovakia for mixed ethnic territories where Slovaks were generally in the minority. He was fortunate in securing first-class support in this work and he raised this Slovak League abroad to the proportions of a national organization which played a vital role in the cultural life of the Slovak nation up to the end of World War II.

The Slovak League in Slovakia had a membership of over 20,000 individuals gathered into over 400 branch units. Its historic mission was to establish upon territories of mixed ethnic peoples 205 Slovak schools whose total enrollment exceeded 10,000 students—young people who otherwise would have been subjected to Magyarizing pressures and influences because the government was disinclined to build new schools for minorities and most of the existing schools were already appropriated by non-Slovak elements. Only the genius of a patriot gifted with uncommon foresight could meet the challenge of so noble and so demanding an assignment, and to meet it as did Gessay, so that the fulfillment of plans exceeded all sanguine expectations.

Ignatius Gessay died in Bratislava on August 12, 1928, still comparatively young and in the midst of some of his greatest activity. He is buried in the local St. Andrew Cemetery and his own words are engraved as an epitaph upon his tombstone: "If my labors have inspired anyone with zeal for our sacred cause, then I have not lived in vain."

Gessay did inspire and still inspires the hearts of Slovak sons who are willing to spend themselves in the service of their country. He was one of those extraordinary patriots whose devotion to his nation prompted him—

both on home territory as well as in America—to undertake as much as his strength and energy could possibly endure in the defense and interests of the most seriously threatened portion of the national body. Such heroes achieve far beyond the measure of everyday hopes and dreams. Gessay had offered himself totally and without the slightest reservations in order to save ten thousand fellowmen. This alone makes him deserving of a lasting monument in Slovakia as well as in America.

Joseph Paučo, Ph. D.

Translated by *Sister M. Martina Tybor, SS.C.M.*

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- 1) *Jednota* (weekly) January 2, 1907. Excerpt from the published minutes of the conference of Slovak Journalists held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on December 21, 1906.
 - 2) *Ibid.*
 - 3) *Indignačné schôdze* (Protest Meetings—Demonstrations), *Jednota Kalendár* (*Jednota Yearbook*) 1908, p. 154.
 - 4) *Jednota* (weekly), April 10, 1907 *Schôdza slovenských novinárov* (Meeting of Slovak Journalists).
 - 5) *Jednota* (weekly), March 1, 1911.
 - 6) *An Open Letter Addressed to Count Michael Károlyi*, New York, N. Y., April 13, 1914.
 - 7) As a result of this effort on the part of Štefánik and the cooperation of Slovak Americans, four thousand men were recruited and sent to France where they were trained and later served with distinction in the French army.
 - 8) *Jednota* (weekly), May 30, 1917. *Zbierka milión dolárov* (The Million Dollar Drive).
 - 9) Joseph Šrobár, Canon, *O Ignácovi Gessayovi* (*About Ignatius Gessay*), an address delivered at the unveiling of a bust of Ignatius Gessay in Bratislava on October 18, 1936.

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THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA firmly believes that the national existence and welfare of the Slovak nation can best be safeguarded by the Slovaks themselves in their own independent Slovak Republic.

F. Vnuk:

Fifty Years of Communist Party of Slovakia (1918-1968)

The first notable Slovak commentary on Communism was made by Marx's contemporary, Ľudovít Štúr. His assessment of Communism was an outright condemnation: "Communism, in spite of all efforts and false pretences to win for mankind its rights, only brings about its degradation, since it has no sound knowledge of mankind. Because of its insistence on principles which are impractical and unattainable Communism is one of the maddest figments ever originating in the human brain."¹ In the past forty years Štúr was much abused by the Slovak Communist intellectuals because of his alleged reactionary thinking.² Yet Štúr's rejection of Communism seems to epitomize the Slovak attitude more fittingly than all the recent attempts by Communist historians to present Communism as a progressive ideology destined to uplift and enrich the Slovak nation.

The inescapable geography which put Slovakia in Central Europe exposed the Slovaks to direct contact with political Communism as far back as 1918-19. Since then the Slovak nation has undergone the complete range of relations which can exist between a nation trying to assert its political identity and an aggressive ideology. These relations, full of drama, paradox and tragedy, are briefly outlined in this short history of the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS).

I. 1918-1921

The very beginning of the KSS is characteristic. The Party started its existence outside Slovakia, in Budapest.

- 1) In his major work, *Slawentum und die Welt der Zukunft*, Quoted by D. Okáli in *Dav; spomienky a štúdie* (Bratislava, 1965), p. 284.
- 2) e. g. L. Novomeský, in his pamphlet, *Marx a slovenský národ* (Malá knižnica Davu, 1933) and in his article, *Karol Marx reviduje históriu Slovákov* (Dav, 2/1933, pp. 18-19).

There in November 1918 Ernő Pór, Minister for Foreign Propaganda in the Communist Government of Hungary, was entrusted by Béla Kun and Tibor Szamuély to organize the Slovak Communist Party as a section of the Communist Party of Hungary.³ The Party conscripted into its ranks Slovak workers, apprentices and soldiers living in those days in defeated Hungary (particularly in Budapest, Ostrihom-Esztergom, Békes-Csába, etc.). On March 27th, 1919 it began publication of its own daily, "Červené noviny" (Red News).⁴ But the Party ran into difficulties when it had to find leaders for the conscripted Slovak proletarian masses. There was hardly a single Slovak of rank and stature to lend his name to the movement. Thus the reins were initially given into the hands of Jewish Socialist and Communist organizers in Budapest who could speak Slovak. To overcome this deficiency Béla Kun requested Lenin to send him some able Slovak Communist leaders from Russia, where a "Czecho-Slovak" Communist Party formed from the Czech and Slovak prisoners of war had been functioning since May 1918.⁵ But since there were no prominent Slovak personalities among these either, Lenin sent to Budapest the next best thing: the Czechs. Among these the most dynamic was one Antonín Janoušek who arrived in Budapest in January 1919.⁶

After some disagreement with B. Kun (Janoušek wanted to lead a Czecho-Slovak section; Kun and his advisors were strongly against it, seeing in it implicit recognition of the imperialistic policies of the Entente) he

3) M. Vietor, *Slovenská sovietska republika* (Bratislava, 1959), p. 53.

4) P. A. Toma, *Slovak Soviet Republic of 1919* (The American Slavic and East European Review, 17/1958, p. 203).

5) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), p. 17.

6) See: Z. Hoření, *Antonín Janoušek, předseda revoluční vlády Slovenské republiky rád* (Bratislava, 1964).

This account of the Slovak Soviet Republic is abstracted from the following books: K. A. Medvecký: *Slovenský převrat I-IV* (Trnava, 1930-31); *Vpád bolševiků na Slovensko roku 1919* (Trnava, 1936); M. Vietor, *Slovenská sovietska republika 1919* (Bratislava, 1955); L. Holotík, *O Slovenské republice r. 1919* (Historický časopis 2/1959); V. Král, *Intervenční válka čs. buržoázie proti maďarské sovětské republice r. 1919* (Praha, 1954); K. Čulen, *O Slovenské sovětské republice z roku 1919* (Kanadský Slovák, May 19—June 9, 1956); P. A. Toma, *Slovak Soviet Republic of 1919* (The American Slavic and East European Review, 17/1958, pp. 203-215).

was made head of the Czech section of the Communist Party of Hungary on April 12, 1919. Towards the end of April the Slovak and the Czech sections were brought under common leadership but it was plainly stated that the Slovak section was to maintain its independence and individuality. There was never a Czecho-Slovak section of the Communist Party of Hungary.

The most important event in the life of this Slovak section was the proclamation of the Slovak Soviet Republic which lasted only two weeks but which has become a source of confused pride and political embarrassment to the contemporary Czech and Slovak socialist historiographers.

On May 20th, 1919 the Hungarian Communist government, accusing the Czecho-Slovak armed forces of violation of the Paris Agreement, ordered its Red Army to invade Slovakia. Carried on the wave of proud Magyar nationalism, humiliated by the 1918 defeat, the Magyar troops swept the southern and eastern plains of Slovakia. They took Lučenec on May 30th, Levice on June 1st, Nové Zámky on June 2nd, Košice and Banská Štiavnica on June 6th, Prešov on June 8th, Bardejov on June 11th and penetrated as far into Central Slovakia as Zvolen. On June 3rd, 1919 "Červené noviny" wrote exultantly: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is being established in Slovakia."

The actual proclamation of the Slovak Soviet Republic took place at Prešov on June 16th, 1919. It was ruled by the Provisional Revolutionary Executive Committee made up largely of Magyar-Jewish and Czech left-wingers. The only Slovak member of some significance was Štefan Stehlík. On June 20th, 1919 the Committee elected a Slovak Revolutionary government headed by Antonín Janoušek. To T. G. Masaryk, who was residing in Prague as the elected President of Czecho-Slovakia, Janoušek sent this challenging message: "We explicitly declare that from now on Slovakia belongs exclusively to the Slovak working class."⁷

The constitutional status of this short-lived Slovak Soviet Republic was obscure, but one thing was beyond doubt: it was violently anti-Czech and fiercely pro-Magyar. It aimed at the breaking up of Czecho-Slovakia and was

7) Quoted by. K. Čulen in *Kanadský Slovák* (of May 26, 1956), p. 3.

openly and aggressively separatist. Both Kun and Lenin considered Czecho-Slovakia as a wilful creation of capitalist Powers and as a tool of imperialist policies in Central Europe. Czecho-Slovakia was alleged to deny the Slovak people "its inalienable right of self-determination" and the Communists in establishing the Slovak Soviet Republic were rectifying this injustice.⁸

In spite of all its revolutionary zeal the Communist-sponsored separatism did not strike roots among the Slovak masses. They were not only apathetic but manifestly hostile to the venture in which they saw only an ill-disguised attempt of the moribund Hungary to save its territorial integrity. The withdrawal of the Hungarian Red Army from Slovakia (June 28–July 4, 1919) spelled the inevitable end of both the Slovak Soviet Republic and the Slovak section of the Communist-Socialist Party of Hungary.

The Slovak decision in 1918 to exchange their hopeless life under the Magyars for a hopeful life with the Czechs was final and irreversible.⁹ But it was a decision fraught with problems and difficulties. Slovakia entered the newly formed Czecho-Slovakia as a land of poor peasants with practically no Slovak urban proletariat. The adherents and disseminators of the Socialist ideas were largely the German and Magyar (or magyarized) workers who were as contemptuous of their Slovak comrades as Marx and Engels had been of the Czechs and Russians. This antipathy was

8) Štefan Stehlík wrote in *Červené noviny* (of July 7, 1919): "On Slovak soil, freed from imperialism, today there was created an independent Slovak Soviet Republic. The first impulsive action of the proletariat liberated from the yoke of Czech imperialism was to realize the right of self-determination which is being exhorted by the oppressors with such a great glory; in reality however, it is being perverted by them... Slovak Soviet Republic turns its weapons... against all who threaten this real unperverted democracy, this inalienable right of self-determination" (by which at that time they could have meant only the Prague Government). Quoted by P. A. Toma, *op. cit.* pp. 208-209.

9) The first years of the Slovak-Czech relationship and its reflection in Slovak political, social and economic life, are described at length in several authoritative works, e.g.: F. Peroutka, *Budování státu I-IV* (Praha 1933-36); J. Opočenský, *Konec monarchie rakousko-uhorské* (Praha, 1928). V. Chaloupecký, *Zápas o Slovensko* (Praha, 1930), I. Dérer, *Slovensko v prevrate a po ňom* (Bratislava, 1924); K. Sidor, *Andrej Hlinka 1864-1926* (Bratislava, 1936).

mutual and in their anti-Magyar feelings the leaders of the Slovak Social Democrats (Dérer, Lehotský, Markovič) were indistinguishable from their bourgeois counterparts (Hlinka, Šrobár, Hodža). Thus in the political sense the parties contesting the first post-war elections in Slovakia offered very much the same program. It was only in the field of social reform that they differed. Here the Social Democrats surpassed everybody in generosity, promising to implement many far-reaching social and economic measures. Their radical policies appealed to the people dissatisfied with the prevailing conditions. Thus in the general election of April, 1920 the Slovak people gave their votes to the Social Democratic Party led by Ivan Dérer.¹⁰

The Magyars and Germans of Slovakia who refused to join Dérer's political platform founded a Social Democratic Party of their own.¹¹ After its electoral victory the Slovak Social Democratic Party lost much of its fighting spirit, adopted many right-wing policies of moderation and even passivity while the Magyar and German Social Democratic Party moved further to the left towards radicalism and turbulent activities. It was led by an able group of ruthless leaders (most of them Jews, several served as Commissars in the Hungarian Soviet Republic of Béla Kun) who were constantly harassing "the reformist Social Democratic government" of V. Tusar by fomenting strikes, unrests and other forms of trouble.¹²

Their activities¹³ became fatal to the Slovak Social Democratic Party which was rapidly sliding under Czech control and soon became identical with all the unpopular measures of the Government. The Slovak Social Democratic Party's inability to fulfil its pre-election promises or to prevent the economic ruination of Slovakia, and the subsequent wholesale unemployment, brought about a massive

10) The Social Democratic Party polled 510,341 out of 1,341,191 valid votes and obtained 23 deputies in the Prague National Assembly.

11) They received 108,546 votes and obtained 4 deputies.

12) J. Mlynárik, *Robotnícke hnutie na Slovensku roku 1920 (od parlamentných volieb do decembrového generálneho štrajku)*. Historický časopis, I/1960, pp. 26-27).

13) Their strongholds were four population centres in the Slovak-Magyar borderland: Bratislava, where the German-language, "Volksstimme" was published, Komárno, Gelnica and Košice, where the Magyar-language, "Kassai Munkás", was published.

desertion of the rank and file members within months after the election.¹⁴ In the meantime the Magyar Social Democratic Party at Košice joined (in May 1920) the Third International and invited the other proletarian parties of Slovakia to follow suit. This proclamation was eagerly listened to by many Social Democratic leaders dissatisfied with Dérier's weak and inept leadership.¹⁵

In September 1920 at the Party Congress at Turčiansky Svätý Martin Dérier failed to win a vote of confidence (out of 132 delegates only 15 voted for him). Unwilling to accept defeat he proclaimed the handful of his followers to be the only true Slovaks and true Social Democrats by which he drove the dissidents into a coalition with the Magyar and German left-wing radicals.

The fruits of this coalition ripened rapidly. On January 16-17, 1920 the left-wingers of the Slovak, Magyar and German Social Democracy, as well as the Jewish Poále Sion, met at Lubochňa and founded the Communist Party of Slovakia in everything but name.¹⁶ It is interesting to look at the national composition of the delegates participating at this Congress. Out of 149 delegates with voting rights 88 were Slovaks, 36 Magyars, 15 Germans, 6 Ruthenes, 4 Jews.¹⁷

The omission to register under its own name proved a very serious one for the future destinies of the KSS. Against

14) M. Strhan, *Kríza priemyslu na Slovensku v rokoch 1921-23* (Bratislava, 1960, pp. 15-80), J. Kramer, *K dejinám priemyslu na Slovensku za prvej ČSR* (Bratislava, 1955).

15) L. Holotík, *Sjazd sociálno-demokratickej strany (l'avice) na Slovensku v januári 1921* (Historický časopis, 3/1963), pp. 340-341.

16) 1921. *Spomienky na vznik KSČ* (Bratislava, 1962). The Czech delegate at the Congress, I. Olbracht, requested the assembled representatives of the Slovak Left to postpone the adoption of the name "Communist Party of Slovakia" in order to be able to adopt the name "Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia" later on. See also *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), pp. 165-166.

17) From the report of the voting commission, as quoted by M. Dzvoník *O istom zakladajúcom sjazde* (Kultúrny život, 7/1966, p. 6). See also H. Gordon Skilling, *The Formation of a Communist Party in Czechoslovakia* (Slavic Review, 14/1955, p. 353). Skilling gives slightly different figures, viz. 92 Slovaks. However, it must be mentioned that these numbers are somewhat misleading, especially with regard to the Jews who were present in every national group, and the Magyars, many of whom were counted as Slovaks.

the opposition of the Magyar delegates the Congress agreed to keep the question of the Party's name in abeyance. They decided to wait for developments in the Czech lands where the situation was ripening at a less rapid rate. Finally at its XIVth Congress (in May 1921) the Czech Social Democratic Party formally accepted the ideological split in its ranks. Its left wing reconstituted itself as the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia (KSČ) immediately absorbing the Slovak section which, nameless and unaffiliated, had been waiting for four months for this moment.¹⁸ By this process the KSS lost its identity, becoming an anonymous partner in an unequal partnership.

II. 1921-1929

The newly constituted KSČ was from its beginning dominated by Czech-German leadership and looking largely after Czech national interest. Slovakia—because of the lack of native leading cadres—soon became a battlefield where the Czech and Magyar elements were fighting for influence. The Czechs were trying to woo the Slovak electorate by defending the existence of Czecho-Slovakia and the integrity of its territories. Already in September 1921 Klement Gottwald had become editor of a Slovak language Party paper, "Hlas ľudu" (People's Voice), and later in 1923 editor-in-chief of another Communist paper, "Pravda chudoby" (Poor Man's Truth). Other prominent Czech Party organizers who came to Slovakia in the early twenties included Karel Bacilek, Karel Schmidke and others.¹⁹

While the Czechs concentrated mainly on the Slovak electorate, the Magyars tried to hold together a sizeable portion of the Magyar electorate by advocating revisionism, self-determination for ethnic minorities, etc.

In the meantime Slovakia was becoming restive and in-

18) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), pp. 170-172. While the Communist Party of Slovakia fused into the KSČ smoothly and without murmur, the Communist Party of the Sudeten Germans (formed in March 1921) refused to amalgamate with the KSČ. Its resistance was broken in November 1921 but only after Lenin's intervention.

19) Gottwald's activities in Slovakia, adorned with the socialist glamour of the cult era, are the object of a book by Z. Holotíková, *Klement Gottwald na Slovensku v rokoch 1921-24* (Bratislava, 1953). Karel Schmidke began to write his name as Karol Šmidke only after 1945.

creasingly discontented with Czech administrative methods, economic and social discrimination and especially with the crude disregard of the Prague Government for the political aspirations of the Slovak nation. The Slovaks were putting forward their demands for the promised autonomy but no one would listen. Even the KSČ, dominated at the time by Czech nationalists, had only scorn for the Slovak demands. At its First Congress it declared: "Slovak autonomy is only a disguise to mask the tendencies aiming at the separation of the Slovak people from the cultural community and from national unity with the Czech nation."²⁰

This mistaken and unrealistic attitude was severely censured at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in Moscow (June-July 1924) where the following resolution was adopted:

1. The Congress affirms that in Czecho-Slovakia there does not exist a single Czechoslovak nation and that the Czechoslovak state, in addition to the Czech nationality, consist of the following nationalities: Slovak, German, Magyar, Ukrainian and Polish.

2. The Congress considers it necessary for the KSČ, in connection with these national minorities, to proclaim and to follow the slogan of the right of a nation to self-determination, including the right to secession. In particular the KSČ must support the struggle of the Slovaks for their independence and it must strive continuously to wrest this movement for independence out of the control of the nationalist bourgeoisie and to bring it into a common struggle of the working class against capitalism . . .²¹

For the Czech Communists it was a bitter pill to swallow. Under its impact the Czecho-Slovak delegation in Moscow was split into a majority and minority, the majori-

20) *Protokol I. rádneho sjezdu KSČ* (Praha, 1923), p. 14.

In practice the KSČ plainly demonstrated its Czechoslovakist and centralized tendencies. On January 1st, 1922 the KSČ abolished the provincial Party structure in Slovakia, splitting the country into four regions directly subordinated to the Central Executive Committee in Prague. Shortly afterwards it abolished Slovak trade union organizations. Such moves seriously hindered the Party activities in Slovakia and antagonized many honest and sincere Slovak left-wingers. These either left in disgust (like J. Schiffel, who returned to the U.S.A.) or were expelled as agents of the nationalist bourgeoisie (like Čulen, Verčík and others).

21) *Pjatyj vsemirnyj kongress komunističeskogo internacionala, 17. ijuna — 8. ijulia 1924 g. Stenografisčeskij otčet, Čast' II. (Priloženija)*, (Moskva, 1925), p. 129.

ty refusing to accept the resolution of the Comintern. Among the ranks of the KSČ the interference of the Comintern produced a serious crisis. The Second Congress of the KSČ was hurriedly convened in November 1924 to deal with the issue. The Congress met in the presence of a leading Comintern official, D. Z. Manuilskij. It was mainly due to his presence that the resolution issued at the end of the Congress proclaimed: "The Party cannot accept the bourgeois lie about the official Czechoslovak nation. By this ruse the Czech bourgeoisie wants to hide its colonial exploitation and bloody oppression of Ruthenia and Slovakia as well as other national minorities".^{21a} But as it turned out even he was powerless to shake the dominating influence of the Czech nationalist right-wingers who in complete disregard of their own resolution continued in the old-style policies of ignoring the legitimate demands of the national minorities even within the Party.²²

A dramatic development took place in March 1925. The Czech rightists and their arrogant attitude towards other nationalities, especially towards the Slovaks, were openly criticized on the pages of "Pravda" by the Soviet expert on the nationalities problem, J. V. Stalin. Stalin saw the narrow-minded and selfish Czech nationalism as the roots of the right-wing deviationism in the KSČ. He wrote:

The Czechoslovak state is a state that marks the national victory of the Czechs. The Czechs have already acquired their national state as a dominant nation... And it is here that we must look for the reason why the divergence between the Right and Left took place along national lines, why the Slovaks and the Germans (oppressed nations) are on the left flank, and the Czechs are on the opposite flank... Such division is quite understandable, if we bear in mind the above-mentioned specific national features of the Czechoslovak state and the dominant position of the Czechs.²³

Stalin's arguments were further developed by D. Z. Manuilskij who quoted, among others, such flagrant examples of national discrimination as the composition of the Politburo of the KSČ which consisted of seven Czechs

21a) *Protokol II. řádného sjezdu KSČ*, (Praha, 1925), p. 8.

22) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), pp. 213-216.

23) J. V. Stalin, *Works* (Moscow, 1954), Vol. VII, p. 61. See also H. Gordon Skilling, *The Comintern and Czechoslovak Communism 1921-1929* (Slavic Review, 19/1960, pp. 238-239).

and two Germans but no Slovaks, Magyars, Poles or Ruthenes.²⁴

The elections in 1925 were the first real test of the Party's hold on the masses. On the whole the Party did not score badly: it emerged as the second strongest party in Czecho-Slovakia. In Slovakia the election results were a telling commentary on the existing situation. The Social Democratic Party practically disappeared (from 510,341 votes in 1920 to 60,581 votes in 1925). But its voters joined mainly the Hlinka People's Party which captured 489,027 votes (235,389 in 1920), i. e. 34.3% of the Slovak electorate thus becoming the largest Slovak party.²⁵ The Communist Party gained 198,212 votes in Slovakia but its support came mostly from the non-Slovak voters as can be seen from a closer look at the districts which voted for the Communists and at the men who were elected into the Parliament²⁶ (out of 8 deputies 3 were of Magyar nationality: Kopasz, Major and Steiner).

The failure to capture the masses of the Slovak rural proletariat was openly admitted in Moscow and was attributed to the Party's omission to adopt the correct position towards the nationalities problem in Czecho-Slovakia and in particular towards the Slovaks:

In Slovakia... under the influence of the revolution, in 1920 the peasant masses moved strongly to the left, but in the course of the last four years, owing to the passivity of the Communist Party in the national question, 200,000 peasants passed from the Socialist

- 24) D. Z. Manuilskij, *Uroki českého krizisa*, (Moskva, 1925). It was the Politburo elected by the Central Committee at the IIIrd Party Congress (Sept. 1925) which consisted of: K. Gottwald, J. Hais, J. Haken (President), J. Harus, B. Jílek, A. Neurath, V. Štern, B. Šmeral and A. Zápotocký.
- 25) Karol Sidor, *Andrej Hlinka 1864-1926* (Bratislava, 1936), pp. 535-538.
- 26)

Electoral district	Com. vote	% of total	Mandates	% Magyars	% Germans
1. Nové Zámky	61,577	20.0	2	62.3	6.8
2. Košice	40,095	20.9	2	41.6	9.9
3. Trnava	28,606	13.9	1	2.3	1.8
4. Banská Bystrica	17,694	11.0	1	2.2	5.6
5. Turč. Sv. Martin	22,355	9.5	1	0.5	5.1
6. Lipt. Sv. Mikuláš	15,697	7.4	1	1.4	1.7
7. Prešov	12,206	6.2	0	2.6	0.7

Party into a party, which, although it is clerical, fight for the autonomy.²⁷

In spite of the impressive overall election results the Party was torn internally by rival factions. After ridding itself of the right wing (Bubník) a new struggle developed between the so-called "ultraleft" (B. Jílek and V. Bolen) and "centre" (B. Šmeral, K. Kreibich, A. Zápotocký).²⁸ These ideological conflicts touched the Party's life in Slovakia only marginally and even then the Czech leaders of the KSČ in Slovakia (K. Gottwald in particular) were supporting the "centre" against the "left". In Slovakia the burning issues were not of ideological but of political and economic character. The continuous closing down of factories and industrial plants, growing unemployment, agricultural crisis, emigration, etc. were leaving little time for ideological disputes.²⁹ After 1926, when the Hlinka People's Party decided to join the government benches, the Communists tried hard to be the spokesmen of the Slovak people against the political wrongs and social injustices of the Czech bourgeoisie. Complete independence of Slovakia was advocated, Czecho-Slovakia was denounced as the offspring of an imperialist war.³⁰ In January 1927 the Party

- 27) G. Volkov, *Ugnetennaja Prikarpat'skaja Rus* (Krestjanskij International, 3-5/1926, p. 126). (Quoted in G. D. Jackson's *Comintern and Peasant*) (London, 1966), p. 288.
- 28) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), pp. 249-269.
- 29) The economic situation of this period has been extensively studied by socialist historians, e. g. J. Mlynárik, *Štrajkové hnutie na Slovensku II. Zemerobotníci v období 1919 až 1929* (Bratislava, 1961); P. Rapoš, *Priemysel Slovenska za kapitalizmu* (Bratislava, 1957); J. Mlynárik, *Nezamestnanosť na Slovensku* (Bratislava, 1964); V. Plevza, *K niektorým otázkam agrárnej krízy v rokoch 1924-34 na Slovensku* (Historický časopis, 2/1966, pp. 203-233); etc.
- 30) At this time the KSČ in Slovakia at its National Conference at Žilina (on July 25th, 1925), launched, on Gottwald's instigation a massive campaign aimed at the expulsion of the Czechs from Slovakia. The battle-cry of the Communist propagandists became: "Vypracte Slovensko!" (Clear out of Slovakia!). The full wording of the slogan was, "Vypracte Slovensko od potlačovacieho aparátu českej buržoázie", according to V. Plevza (Historický časopis, 4/1965, p. 510) and "Vypracte Slovensko od násilníckeho aparátu", according to J. Kramer and J. Mlynárik (Historický časopis, 3/1965, p. 438).

Though there was no doubt about Gottwald's authorship of this slogan, the blame for the embarrassing "mistake" was put later

convoked a regional conference at Plešivec where it attempted to lead a nation-wide protest against the industrial decline of Slovakia.³¹ But all with little success.

In February 1929 the Fifth Congress of the KSČ met. It passed into Party history as the final battleground where the splinter-groups of the Party dissidents were defeated and the "true bolshevist nucleus" of the Party came out victorious. But in spite of the intense ideological wrangle the Slovak question did appear on the agenda. The Slovak cause was defended by none less than K. Gottwald (who was to emerge as the new leader of the Party) proclaiming before the Congress: "The IInd Congress of the KSČ declared null and void the theses of the Ist Party Congress (i. e. concerning the unitary "Czechoslovak" nation) but this was in words only . . . The ratification of the First Party Congress theses was only on paper, a mere formality".^{31a} By promising new corrective measures Gottwald (who—it should be remembered—in those days was acting for the Party in Slovakia and was the spokesman for the Slovaks) swayed the overwhelming majority of the Slovak section of the KSČ to the side of the victorious "bolshevist

on J. Verčík, "the agent of nationalist bourgeoisie" (e. g. M. Gosiorovský, *Slovensko a V. sjazd KSČ* (Československý časopis historický), 1/1954, p. 4-15).

While attacking the Czech bourgeoisie for its oppression of the Slovak masses, the KSČ leaders did not relax their centralist hold on their Slovak comrades. At each Party Congress the Slovak delegates complained about this unsatisfactory state of affairs (See: *Protokol III. řádného sjezdu KSČ* [Praha, 1925], pp. 41 and 73; *Protokol IV. řádného sjezdu KSČ* [Praha, 1927], p. 33; *Protokol V. řádného sjezdu KSČ* [Praha, 1929], pp. 40 and 50), but in vain. This aspect of the Party history has been neglected by the socialist historians except a brief and restrained comment by J. Kramer and J. Mlynárik, *Revolučné hnutie a národnostná otázka na Slovensku v dvadsiatych rokoch* (Historický časopis, 3/1965, pp. 423-443). For more recent writings on the theme see: Z. Holotíková, *O riešení národnostnej otázky v KSČ* (Referát na konferencii Hist. ústavu SAV a Ústavu dejín KSS, jún 1966) and J. Mlynárik, *Dr. B. Šmeral a slovenská národnostná otázka v počiatkoch komunistického hnutia* (Čs. časopis historický, 5/1967, pp. 653-666).

31) J. Pleva, *Význam Plešiveckej konferencie v januári 1927* (Bratislava, 1958). According to Kramer and Mlynárik (loc. cit., p. 442, footnote 32) the importance of this conference was disproportionately inflated because of Gottwald's participation at it.

31a) *Protokol V. řádného sjezdu KSČ* (Praha, 1929), p. 12.

faction".³² However, one point is worth noting: while the "bolshevist nucleus of the Party in Slovakia was made up of Bacílek, Široký, Steiner, Urx"³³ (i. e. two Czechs and two Magyars), the dissidents ("nationalists and liquidators") who were expelled from the Party amidst a storm of abuse (Čulen, Felcán, Verčík) were Slovaks.³⁴

III. 1929-1938

The internal struggle inside the Party was fought bitterly and not always behind closed doors. Inevitably it undermined the Party's image in the voters' eyes. In the 1929 elections it gained 152,242 votes (10.55%) in Slovakia, a considerable decline in voting strength when compared with the 1925 election results (13.41%).³⁵ Yet in Parliament the new "bolshevist cadres" displayed fierce and sanguinary pugnacity epitomized in the words of the new Party leader, K. Gottwald, addressed in December 1929 to the coalition benches:

We are the revolutionary Party of Czechoslovak proletariat and in Moscow we have, indeed, our revolutionary General Staff. Yes we go to Moscow in order to learn. Would you like to know what we learn? We go to Moscow to learn from the Russian bolsheviks how to break your necks. And you must admit that the Russian bolsheviks are very good at it.³⁶

32) Z. Holotíková, *Bolševizačný proces KSČ v rokoch 1924-29* (Historický časopis 2/1957, pp. 204-210); M. Gosiorovský, *Slovensko a V. sjazd KSČ* (Čs. časopis historický, 1/1954, pp. 4-15).

33) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), p. 256.

34) Verčík, Mlynárik, Koreň, etc. were branded as "nationalists" and expelled; Čulen, Felcán, Koláriková, etc. were branded as "liquidators" and expelled also. The latter were the authors of the so-called "Hlohovecké memorandum" (of December 1928) in which they requested the reorganization of the Party structure in Slovakia and complete freedom of action in specifically Slovak matters. (See: Pravda of January 31, and February 7th, 1929).

In 1930 the KSČ finally consented to a limited decentralization and a Slovak province ("celoslovenský kraj") of the KSČ was instituted. Š. Major (of Magyar nationality) and K. Bacílek (of Czech nationality) were put in charge. See: V. Plevza, *Vytvorenie celoslovenského kraja a revolučné hnutie na Slovensku na začiatku tridsiatych rokov* (Historický časopis, 2/1962, p. 184).

35) For an interesting statistical analysis of the 1929 election results see: R. V. Burks, *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Princeton, N. J., 1961), pp. 150-158 and 216-219.

36) K. Gottwald, *Spisy I* (Praha, 1953), p. 322.

During the severe economic depression which swept the Western world in the late twenties and early thirties and which caused acute unemployment in Slovakia (some 250,000 in 1933)³⁷ the Communists organized hunger marches, protest meetings and strikes. A meeting in May 1931 at a small village in southern Slovakia, Košúty, ended with a shooting fray resulting in the death of three demonstrators. The Party skilfully exploited the incident to advertize the social plight of rural workers in the Slovak countryside.³⁸

In the years 1929-33 the Communist press paid much attention to the political solution of the Slovak question and Slovak grievances were repeatedly aired on its pages. But as V. Kopecký confessed at the VIth Party Congress (1931) it was more in the nature of lip service than anything else: "The decisions of the Vth Party Congress concerning the solution of the nationalities problem remained on paper only and in spite of repeated emphasizing of their importance by the central leadership of the Party there was no practical indication that we were fighting for the right of self-determination of the nations."^{38a}

This national inequality was demonstrated even in the Party hierarchy. The higher Party ranks were—as before—an almost exclusive monopoly of the Czech and German comrades. The Presidium constituted at the VIth Party

37) *Přehled československých dějin III (1918-1945)* (Praha, 1960), p. 325. The gravity of the situation is reflected in the emigration figures which were considerably greater for Slovakia (where only about 25% of the total population lived) than for the Czech lands:

	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Emigration from Č-SR:	24,540	30,715	25,712	9,567	5,165	4,735
from Slovakia:	13,544	19,401	16,682	4,527	2,222	3,099

38) The shooting at Košúty has attracted unusually great attention from Communist propagandists and publicists, e. g. the pamphlet, *Nyní je v Košútech pořádek a klid* (1931); V. Plevza, *Košútska tragédia* (Příspěvky k dějinám KSČ, 8/1959, pp. 91-107); E. Paulíny, *Košútske udalosti v máji 1931* (Bratislava-Martin, 1961); E. Kadnár, *Krvavé Košúty* (Bratislava, 1963).

It is perhaps worthwhile to note that the inhabitants of Košúty were of Magyar nationality and so was Š. Major, the convicted instigator of the disturbance.

38a) *Protokol VI. řádného sjezdu KSČ*, (Praha, 1931), p. 143.

Congress had only one representative from Slovakia among its 15 members.³⁹

This omission was quite a serious matter, because by the midthirties the Communist Party of Slovakia was already producing its own native leaders. The young Slovak Communist students who in 1924 grouped in Prague around the quarterly (later monthly), "Dav" (1924-1937), were growing up in stature and outlook and were ready and eager to take over from the Czech, Magyar and Jewish spokesmen of the Slovak proletariat.⁴⁰ Unfortunately they were striving for power at a time when the Party was purging itself of intellectual and other non-proletarian ballast, so that their hopes and expectations were frustrated.⁴¹

Other important changes in the Party line were also in the offing. The Party was directed by the Comintern to adopt new attitudes to a number of political issues. Up to 1933 the Communists considered democracy (i.e. bourgeois democracy) and fascism as "the children of the same mother, the bourgeoisie".⁴² Masaryk, Beneš, Hlinka, Krámař were all Fascists of the same brand as Hitler and Mussolini. But by the summer of 1933 Stalin realized that Hitler was a much greater evil. Looking for new allies Stalin selected two of the most likely states worried by the growing power of Hitler's Germany: France and Czechoslovakia. The KSČ was instructed to take a more positive stand towards the official Czech foreign and domestic

39) It was E. Fried of Magyar-Jewish origin. According to H. G. Skilling the ethnic composition of the 60-member Central Committee was as follows: 37 Czechs, 10 Germans, 8 Slovaks (and Magyars), 4 Ukrainians and 1 Pole. See: H. Gordon Skilling, *Gottwald and the Bolshevisation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1929-39* (Slavic Review, 20/1961, pp. 644-645). The inadequate representation of Slovaks in the top governing bodies of the Party apparatus (i. e. Presidium-Politburo and Secretariat-Orgburo) is statistically summed up in Appendix I.

40) These young Communist intellectuals of the early twenties had their hey-day in the late forties and met a tragic fate in the early fifties. In the years 1950-54 they became the victims of purges and their rehabilitation began only in 1963. For a post-rehabilitation view of the Dav-group see: Š. Drug, *Dav a davisti* (Bratislava, 1965).

41) V. Plevza, *Príspevok o činnosti davistov v revolučnom hnutí za predmníchovskej ČSR* (Historický časopis, 1/1964), pp. 20-21.

42) K. Gottwald, *Spisy IV* (Praha, 1951), p. 212.

policies. This, of course, meant that the Slovak question and the nationalities problem in general had to be played down and the Party soon nodded its approval where only a few months ago it used to voice its sharp criticism.⁴³

The signing of the Soviet-Czecho-Slovak Treaty in May 1935 marked a milestone in the Party's policy. The Party put on a mask of loyal respectability and replaced its internationalism by a newly-discovered patriotism. It conveniently forgot its past hostilities to "the imperialist agent Beneš" and supported him in the presidential election in December 1935. At the Seventh Congress of the KSČ (April 1936) the Party took a firm position "to defend Czecho-Slovakia against Hitler". It became a zealous exponent of the Popular Front against Fascism and reaction, and the Slovak grievances once so prominent in its program were now hardly mentioned. The militant cry for "self-determination including the right to secede" was now replaced with much softer demands voiced by Gottwald at the VIIth Party Congress: "The Party will strive to achieve the realization of minimal requirements for normal coexistence of all nationalities in Czecho-Slovakia by insisting on a democratic policy towards nationalities and on equal rights for all nations (of Czecho-Slovakia) in all spheres of public life."⁴⁴

The approaching municipal elections made the Party somewhat wary and hurriedly it came forward with a "plan for the economic, social and cultural advancement of Slovakia" announced at Banská Bystrica in May 1937.⁴⁵ But the plan did not excite anybody. It was unrealistic and was looked upon as one of the many grandiose schemes which the Party submitted with monotonous regularity year after

43) A somewhat confused picture of the situation can be found in V. Plevza's *KSČ a revolučné hnutie na Slovensku 1929-1938* (Bratislava, 1965), pp. 237-420.

44) K. Gottwald, *Spisy VIII* (Bratislava, 1953), p. 167. This phase of Party activities is discussed at length in a number of publications such as *Na obranu republiky proti fašizmu a vojne* (Bratislava, 1955); M. Filo, *Boj KSČ na Slovensku na obranu republiky* (Bratislava, 1960); I. Kolesár, *Otázka obnovy demokracie a demokratických práv i slobôd proti fašizmu (od VII. kongresu Kominterny r. 1935)* (Sborník FFUK, 10/1959, pp. 163-181).

45) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), p. 359. Also V. Široký, *Za šťastné Slovensko v socialistickom Československu* (Bratislava, 1952).

year, knowing well that it would never be called upon to implement them.

The turns and twists in the Party line could not possibly impress the Slovak electorate. In the municipal elections (May 1938) the Party found itself deserted by its erstwhile supporters. Its advocacy of pro-Beneš and anti-autonomist policies⁴⁶ estranged it from the Slovak voters, while its noisy denunciations of the revisionist claims by Hungary, Germany and Poland antagonized its non-Slovak voters.

The overwhelming electoral defeat in Slovakia (in the Czech lands the Party maintained its support) alarmed the Slovak Party leaders who clearly read the writing on the wall.⁴⁷ And thus on the eve of Czecho-Slovakia's disintegration the Party attempted another somersault and tried to sponsor the autonomistic cause, even if it meant forming a common front with Hlinka's Party. But it was now too late. No party in Slovakia cared for partnership with the Communists and Hlinka's Party least of all. The speed with which events marched by-passed the Party altogether.

46) J. Ušiak, *Boj KSČ s Hlinkovou slovenskou ľudovou stranou a vplyv na masy v období nástupu fašizmu (Príspevky k dejinám KSČ, 5/1963, pp. 710-29)*. Also V. Plevza, *KSČ a revolučné hnutie na Slovensku 1929-1938* (Bratislava, 1965), pp. 462-474.

47) The Communist historians merely record the electoral defeat without going into details, without drawing any conclusion (e. g. Plevza, *op. cit.*, p. 471). In many small towns the Communist vote virtually disappeared and in bigger towns it was severely reduced. On the whole the proportion of those who voted Communist dropped from 14% in 1935 to something like 8.9% in 1938. No comprehensive results have been compiled so far; the Party historians carefully avoid this area. A brief glance at the election results in a few Slovak cities shows convincingly how the Party fared at the polls. (The results are compared with those of the Hlinka People's Party, the main beneficiary of the Communist loss. Figures are taken from *Slovenský denník* of June 12, 1938):

Town	KSS votes				People's Party votes			
	1935	1938	Loss	in %	1935	1938	Gain	in %
Bratislava	5,255	2,856	2,399	45.7	5,640	8,133	2,493	44.3
Nové Mesto n/V	642	554	88	13.5	910	1,243	333	37.9
Snina	243	76	167	68.8	44	607	563	1098
Stará Ľada	4,658	2,098	2,560	55.0	586	849	363	62.0
Modra	?	64			?	1,064		
Michalovce	?	79			?	1,253		
Trebišov (dist.)	?	777			?	3,471		

The collapse of Czecho-Slovakia found the Party's fortunes in Slovakia at their lowest ebb. This was openly acknowledged by the Party leadership in its report to the Executive of the Comintern in December 1938. With a remorseful self-criticism V. Široký confessed:

We Communists represented in Slovakia the national interests of the Czech nation, while the Slovak national interests were further represented by Hlinka's Party... Only at the last moment as the Czechoslovak crisis was reaching its climax did we put forward a demand for the democratic solution of the Slovak problem, i. e. the granting of full autonomy.⁴⁸

IV. 1938-1944

The declaration of autonomy on October 6th, 1938 was shortly followed by the suppression of Party activities and in January 1939 the Party was disbanded. The Party leaders escaped abroad and with regard to Party leadership in Slovakia, it is interesting to note that the Slovak nationals, if they got away at all, fled mainly to the West (Valo, Clementis), while the non-Slovak leaders sought their refuge in the Soviet Union (Šmidke, Bacílek, Major. Široký went first to Paris, then to Moscow).⁴⁹

Drawing conclusions from the rejection of the Party policies by the Slovak people and facing the new situation fairly and squarely, the Comintern decided on the last and long-delayed step: it gave its approval to the founding of an independent (albeit illegal) Communist Party of Slovakia (in May 1939).⁵⁰ Its leadership was entrusted to three relatively minor and unknown functionaries: J. Ďuriš, L. Benada, J. Osoha. Of these the ablest and most dynamic was Ján Osoha, a Czech by birth. The leadership faced a tremendous task of building a network of illegal cells from the fragments and remains of what once was a Party organization in Slovakia. Traditional Party strongholds went to Hungary by the Vienna Award of November 1938.^{50a} The

48) *Dejinná križovatka* (Bratislava, 1964), pp. 27-28.

49) *Slovak Studies IV* (Rome, 1964), p. 30.

50) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), p. 399.

50a) Interesting evidence of the solid support the Party received from the Magyar-speaking population of Slovakia can be found in the recently published bibliography, *Zoznam komunistických novín a časopisov marxistickej ľavice z rokov 1919-38* (Martin, 1961). The bibliography lists 125 separate newspapers and periodicals of which

newly-acquired independence of Slovakia (in March 1939) was a powerful stabilizing factor on the political scene leaving very little scope for the subversive activities of the Communists.⁵¹

For the Communists the situation was further aggravated by the Nazi-Soviet Pact (August 1939), the Soviet participation in the Fourth partition of Poland and the Soviet recognition, both 'de facto' and 'de jure', of the independent Slovak state. Under the impact of these events the Slovak Communist leadership in the West (Paris) disintegrated.⁵² At home the Party leaders were even more confused and completely at a loss. The illegal handbills and propaganda pamphlets betray the prevalent mood of perplexity and obvious embarrassment of the underground Party organizers in their desperate attempts to explain away the things they could not comprehend.

In the Soviet attitude towards the Slovak state they saw a sure sign of Soviet approval of the new geographico-political reorganization of Central Europe. In response to it they drew up, sometime in October 1939, a new political program, the key-note of which was: "The free and independent Soviet Slovakia."⁵³

This program became a dominant feature of all the illegal Communist activities in Slovakia up to 1944. It was only natural for an independent Party to sponsor such a policy in an independent state. But the scheme did not pass

71 were published in the Slovak language, 50 (i. e. 40%) in Magyar, 3 in German and 1 in Ukrainian.

51) A. Hučková-Štvrtecká, *Činnosť prvého ilegálneho Ústredného výboru KSS* (Bratislava, 1959).

52) Clementis denounced the Nazi-Soviet pact for which he was expelled from the Party, Široký rapidly departed to Moscow and Valo retired into neutral passivity.

About the impact of this infamous alliance on the Slovak (and Czech) Communists in Paris, see Theo. H. Florin, *S Vladom Clementisom v Paríži a v Londýne* (Dav, spomienky a štúdie, [Bratislava, 1965], p. 467).

53) Confiscated Communist propaganda handbills in the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, 56/38606-15.

These documents help to pinpoint the beginning of the campaign for an independent Soviet Slovakia which was not later than in October 1939. At that time the Communists went to considerable trouble to explain that the Soviet Union had not exchanged Communism for the National Socialism of Hitler.

by unchallenged. The first to protest against this line was—as might have been expected—the illegal Communist Party in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia lead by Edo Urx who as a Party functionary had spent a number of years in Slovakia. The Party in the Protectorate continued to call itself the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia. It claimed to be the direct successor of the banned Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia and a parent organization of the Communist Party of Slovakia. It advocated the restoration of the pre-Munich Czecho-Slovakia and objected to any policy promulgation which was not consistent with its current Party line. The Slovaks on the other hand were rejecting any kind of affiliation and insisted on equality and independence. After prolonged disagreement the dispute was referred to Moscow for arbitration⁵⁴ and there Gottwald issued a ruling completely vindicating the stand of the Slovak Communists. He sent the following message to Urx (in March 1940):

Your pre-war pattern of thinking must change. Behind the slogan "Restoration of Czecho-Slovakia" are hidden imperialistic and anti-Soviet schemes... We expressly emphasize that our Party fully accepts the right of self-determination both for the Czechs and for the Slovaks. This right of self-determination implies the right to live in an independent state. We fight for the restoration of the national freedom and territorial independence of the Czechs. As far as the Slovaks are concerned we fight for the complete sovereignty of the present-day Slovak state. It is this struggle for the right of self-determination which differentiates our road from that of Beneš and world imperialism. The relation between the Czechs and Slovaks stand now on a new footing. Slovak separatism plays today a different role. That is why we are giving up the old slogans concerning Slovakia.⁵⁵

Encouraged by this message the Slovak Communists tried to outdo in nationalist zeal everybody including the official Slovak propaganda. The only criticism they received from Moscow was the advice not to stress too much the Soviet character of their "independent Soviet Slovakia" program.⁵⁶

54) The dispute is summarized in *Dejinná križovatka* (Bratislava, 1964), pp. 63-88.

55) *Dejinná križovatka* (Bratislava, 1964), p. 61.

56) S. Falt'an, *Ku Král'ovej recenzii trochu inak* (Historický časopis, 4/1966, p. 588).

The idea of national independence being at the root of the Party's illegal activities was not given up even when the Soviet Union gave its official recognition to Beneš and his government then in exile in London. The clandestine journal, "Hlas ľudu" (Voice of the people), commented on the resumption of diplomatic relations between Beneš and the Kremlin:

The pact between the Soviet Union and the Czecho-Slovak government in exile is not seen by the Communist Party of Slovakia as a pact with the government of a future state which has its established boundaries, its established regime. The (Czecho-Slovak) government in London was created without the participation and without the will of the working people in Slovakia... The question of an independent (Slovak) state, or autonomy, or federation with the fraternal Czech nation is now of secondary importance and it will be settled after the defeat and destruction of German imperialism.^{56a}

Slovak police and security organs who had infiltrated the illegal Communist organizations⁵⁷ watched this development with keen interest. When the Soviet-German conflict broke out (June, 1941) the Slovak police within a few hours arrested all the members of the illegal Central Committee (except J. Osoha) and some 1,100 illegal Party activists.⁵⁸ Most of these were released from detention after three or four weeks and lost no time in regrouping and starting again. A new Central Committee was set up by J. Osoha and this in turn was broken up by the police in April 1942. J. Osoha again eluded the dragnet and at

56a) Quoted by M. Gosiorovský in *Historický časopis*, No. 3/1968, p. 371.

57) In this connection it is worth quoting from a report of the German Minister to Slovakia, M. v. Killinger (of August 19th, 1940): "Die... in die kommunistische Zellen geschickten Leute bewähren sich sehr gut, so dass der Erfolg der Arbeit gesichert und alle Zellen der hier, wieder erstehenden kommunistischen Organisationen erfasst werden. Die inzwischen festgestellten kommunistische Funktionäre werden listenmässig geführt und laufend ergänzt" (2276/479876-84).

58) German documents 610/248627.

At this time the Russians parachuted into Slovakia V. Široký and V. Škrabala. But they were discovered very soon after their arrival and put in prison where Široký stayed until 1945. When in 1949 Široký emerged as the most powerful man in Slovakia trusted by both Moscow and Prague, legendary stories were written about his underground and illegal activities which lasted—when all said and done—some five weeks.

tempted to organize the third Central Committee of the KSS. But in July he was caught and imprisoned together with the other members of the Committee.⁵⁹

These police actions deprived the illegal Party organization in Slovakia of all its old leaders trained in the Stalinist mould of blind and unquestioning obedience. Continuity with the pre-war Party politics was thus broken and the way was cleared for new men to emerge at the top. As it happened they were almost without exception the younger generation of the Party intellectuals, recruited and groomed by Vlado Clementis (then in London). They lacked the rugged working-class background but they possessed the self-assertive spirit of intense national pride. One of them, Štefan Bašt'ovanský, tried to continue (against his better judgement) with the illegal activities in the old traditional style (handbills and pamphlets read by very few, incitement to sabotage obeyed by nobody) only to find himself in prison by May 1943.⁶⁰

The leadership of the demoralized and decimated ranks now passed into the hands of G. Husák and L. Novomeský, who disagreed with those tactics and methods which were costing the Party so much and achieved nothing. As the men on the spot they proposed a more subtle and unorthodox approach which took into account the political and social conditions in Slovakia, the mentality and sentiments of the masses and the weakness of Slovak war-time administration. The Party really went underground and the outward signs of activities almost disappeared. Moscow, disturbed by the apparent lack of fighting spirit, decided to send to Slovakia two trusted emissaries to revive the dormant proletarian masses. They were K. Šmidke and K. Bacílek. Neither of them was Slovak but both had worked in Slovakia in the interwar period. Šmidke, the more experienced of the two, listened with interest to the suggestions of the Slovak intellectuals and to their amazement he agreed with them.⁶¹

Šmidke set up a new Central Committee of the KSS

59) O. Krajňák, *Protifašistické hnutie na Slovensku*. (Nová mysl, 8/1964, pp. 695-703); G. Husák, *Svedectvo o SNP* (Bratislava, 1964), pp. 33-36; *Dejinná križovatka* (Bratislava, 1964), pp. 122-126.

60) *Dejinná križovatka* (Bratislava, 1964), p. 126.

61) G. Husák, *Svedectvo o SNP* (Bratislava, 1964), pp. 51-56.

(which included himself, Husák and Novomeský) re-established and revived the network of illegal Party organizations and directed their activities along a new and more realistic path. He entered into close collaboration with the bourgeois illegal groups (and, through them, with the army) and did not scruple to exploit to the full the nationalist sentiments and aspirations of the Slovaks.⁶² The last thing was, of course, not an easy task, because in the meantime the Soviet Union had promised Beneš to restore pre-Munich Czecho-Slovakia. And not only that. As revealed recently, Beneš was given by Stalin, in December 1943, virtually a free hand in his dealings with the Slovaks. According to Fierlinger (Czecho-Slovak Ambassador in Moscow) Stalin allegedly told Beneš "to keep the Slovaks firmly in hand."^{62a}

By these tactics of exploiting nationalistic feeling in the country and with the military defeat of Germany looming larger and closer every day, the Communists and their bourgeois allies were preparing an armed uprising in Slovakia. Their conspiratory efforts were partly frustrated by an untimely start, triggered off by Soviet partisans, which doomed the venture to failure. But while it lasted (August-October 1944) "the Slovak national uprising" (as this revolt became officially known after 1945) was a remarkable achievement in several respects.⁶³ Its effect on the future political development of Slovakia was to be far-reaching and lasting.

Right at the beginning of the uprising the Communist Party of Slovakia came into the open and published (on September 2nd, 1944) its proclamation in which it implied that Slovakia—though a part of Czechoslovakia—would have a very broad autonomy which would include even a sepa-

62) *Slovenské národné povstanie 1944* (Bratislava 1965), pp. 191-221.

62a) J. Barto, *Riešenie vzťahu Čechov a Slovákov* (Bratislava, 1968), p. 11.

63) This event is by far the most written-about subject in modern Slovak history. For a critical review of bibliography on this theme see: F. Vnuk, *Neuveriteľné sprisahanie* (Middletown, Pa., 1964), pp. 181-191. Also S. Falt'an, *Niektoré otázky okolo hodnotenia SNP* (Historický časopis, 2/1964, pp. 161-185). A complete bibliography of books and articles on the subject in 1963-64 was compiled by A. Kociská (Historický časopis, 2/1965, pp. 309-328).

rate army.⁶⁴ On September 9, 1944 the KSS began to publish the daily, "Pravda", proudly branded as "the official organ of the Communist Party of Slovakia".⁶⁵ On September 17th, 1944 it arranged a joint Party Congress with the Social Democratic Party at which the Social Democratic Party merged into the KSS. It elected its own Central Committee with Šmidke as President, Husák and Čech (Social Democrat) as Vice-Presidents. The Party displayed vigour and independence to a degree which both the Czech and the Soviet commissars found disquieting.

The Czech Communists who were spending the war years in Moscow thought it necessary to reaffirm their primacy before it was too late and promptly dispatched to Slovakia two "experienced comrades", R. Slánsky and J. Šverma, to see that the Party line was correctly drawn and properly applied. After their arrival (September 28th, 1944) the Slovak Communist leadership had to do as it was told. As a result there followed a great deal of retracting especially in those fields where exuberant nationalism had carried the home-grown leaders too far.

The uprising revealed with startling clarity the secondary role and subordinate position to which the KSS was now relegated. In proclaiming their allegiance to the Czecho-Slovak Republic the Slovak Communists were negating the only positive asset of their political program so loudly advertised in 1939-44 under the slogan of an independent Soviet Slovakia. The blow was shattering not only to the Slovak people at large but also to the less doctrinaire Party members.⁶⁶

In order to make the best of a bad job the Communists kept on assuring the people that the new Czecho-Slovak Republic would be incomparably better than the old one,

64) The proclamation persistently talks about "our Slovak (not Czecho-slovak) army". For the full text of the document see: G. Husák, *Svedectvo o SNP* (Bratislava, 1964), pp. 257-258.

65) The daily, "Pravda", as it appeared during the uprising (September — October 1944) was recently reprinted and is available in a convenient form, *Pravda v období SNP* (Bratislava, 1964).

66) There were reports that workers at several places proclaimed a Slovak Soviet Republic (e. g. at Nemecké Pravno); in other places (Podbrezová) there was strong agitation for the proclamation of Soviet Slovakia. This unwillingness of the working class to return to a common state with the Czechs is most telling.

that the excesses of the Czech administration would not be repeated, that the Slovak national individuality would be unquestionably accepted, etc. In other words they were posing as the guarantors of all those rights and achievements which the Hlinka People's Party had secured for the Slovak nation when declaring autonomy (October 1938). They openly advocated a federated Czecho-Slovakia.⁶⁷ Unfortunately for them in 1944-45 the Slovaks were past the autonomy stage and were thinking in terms of state independence.

Against the opposition of many Czech politicians, including Beneš himself, the Slovak Communists succeeded in retrieving from the wreckage of the Slovak independence some of those prerequisites which gave post-war Slovakia a quasi-autonomous status.⁶⁸ What is even more surprising, they were able to preserve their own independence. And thus one finds in post-war Czecho-Slovakia a somewhat anomalous situation. Alongside the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia there existed a Communist Party of Slovakia (with no regional equivalent in the Czech lands) which to all intents and purposes was treated as a separate political party. As it happened it was a most expedient arrangement because it enabled the Communists in the critical post-war months (April 1945—May 1946) to have two Deputy Prime Ministers in the Provisional Government (instead of one) and almost twice as many ministers, parliamentarians, etc. as any other political party.

V. 1945-1949

In the years 1945-6 the KSS was without doubt the most nationalistic party ever to enter the Slovak political scene. It was vehemently anti-German and anti-Magyar, and there seemed to be no limits to its nationalistic excesses. It lured into its camp Slovak voters by the promise of agrarian and wide-spread social reforms, it appealed

67) Thus spoke G. Husák at Košice on February 28th, 1945: "We want to have a federated state... in which each nation will be master in his own house." See: G. Husák, *Za národnú a ľudovú demokraciu* (Košice, 1945), p. 14. Also J. Jablonický, *Slovensko na prelome* (Bratislava, 1965), pp. 248-296.

68) *Program prvej domácej vlády národného frontu Čechov a Slovákov* (Košice, 1945).

to the nationalist and even the religious feeling of the people, it was willing to overlook anybody's past, no matter how compromising.⁶⁹

Outwardly the KSS was united, but, as it transpired later, inside it was torn with internal jealousies which very soon decomposed its ranks and paralysed its strength as an independent political force. The old-guard leaders (Široký, Ďuriš, etc.) who spent their war years in prison did not see eye to eye with the leadership which had been put together during the 1944 uprising (Husák, Šmidke, etc.). The Široký-group intrigued against the Šmidke-Husák-group and in their schemes they had the support of the Czech Communist leadership. In May 1945 at the joint session of both Party Presidia the Slovaks were compelled to adopt a common policy with their Czech comrades on all public issues of the day. The role of the KSS was defined as being "a part of a unitary KSČ with a united leadership".⁷⁰ In practice it meant a complete subjugation of the KSS to the dictatorial authority of the KSČ. This was the end of the short-lived independence of the KSS (1939-1945).

One of the first moves of Gottwald was to impose on the KSS a more amenable leadership to replace the Šmidke-Husák-group. In July 1945 Gottwald delegated Široký to take over the Party affairs in Slovakia.⁷¹ Široký hurriedly convened a Party conference at Žilina (Aug. 11-12, 1945) where he was confirmed in his position as the Party President. Široký saw to it that the top Party positions were filled with his men. Thus he had become, already in Aug. 1945, the undisputed authority in Party matters in Slovakia. "Široký concentrated in his own hands and in the hands of his own group of collaborators in the apparatus of the KSS Central Committee factual decisions about Party

69) This is again another neglected chapter of the Party history. The nationalist excesses, especially against the Magyar minority, formed a part of the accusation levelled at the "bourgeois nationalists" in 1950-54. An oblique reference to the nationalist policies of the KSS has been made recently in the book of J. Zvara, *A magyar nemzetiségi kérdés melogdása Szlovakiában* (Bratislava, 1965), pp. 22-69. Also J. Jablůnický in *Slovensko na prelome* (Bratislava, 1965) pp. 396-409.

70) J. Barto, *Riešenie vzťahu Čechov a Slovákov* (Bratislava 1968), p. 55.

71) *ib.*, p. 99.

policies, about the Party itself and about its leading cadres. These men were selected by Široký himself according to his own personal likings", complained G. Husák recently.⁷² Out of 9 men in the Party Presidium Husák identified these as the members of the Široký group: Široký, Ďuriš, Bašťovanský, Valachovič, Holdoš. This leaves on the other side Husák, Šoltész, Šmidke and Zupka.

While acting as a strong man of the KSS, Široký realized that he owed his position to the Czech Communists and consequently he was an ever-obedient executor of their wishes. In this way the policy of the KSS became divorced from the current needs and realities of the Slovaks. The policies of the KSČ were designed to attract the Czech masses and paid very little attention to the Slovak national interests. The Party faced the first post-war electoral contest in a state of internal disunity, with a program which lacked conviction, realism and electoral appeal.

Its only competitor for the allegiance of the Slovak electorate was the Democratic Party (heir and successor of the old Agrarian Party of M. Hodža) dominated almost exclusively by the Slovak Protestant bourgeoisie of pro-Beneš sympathies. The Hlinka People's Party being banned, the Catholic section of the Slovak people (the support of which was to decide the general election scheduled on May 26th, 1946) had no party of its own. To win these vital votes the leaders of the Democratic Party concluded an agreement with the representatives of the Slovak Catholics ("April Agreement") promising considerable concessions in exchange for the Catholic vote.⁷³ As a result of this solid backing of the Catholic majority the Democratic Party emerged victorious from the electoral contest polling 62.0% of the total vote (999,622 votes), while the Communist Party gained only 30.4% (489,596 votes), the remaining 7.6% went to two minor parties or represented "white ticket" and informal votes.⁷⁴

While the electorate in the Czech lands overwhelmingly

72) G. Husák, *Barnabitky a čo im predchádzalo*, in *Nové slovo*, No. 8/1968.

73) V. Prečan, *Slovenský katolicizmus pred februárom 1948* (Bratislava, 1961), pp. 85-108.

74) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), p. 504.

endorsed the Marxist policies⁷⁵ in Slovakia the Communist Party (which—it should be remembered—was already then a united party of both the Communist and the Social Democrats) came second best in what was actually a two-party contest. This massive rejection of the Marxist policies led to deep soul-searching in the Central Committee in Prague and Bratislava. The Party now tempered (at least partly) its reckless nationalism and started to attack the Democratic Party for harbouring fascist and reactionary elements.⁷⁶ Though nominally both Communist and Democratic Parties were partners in the so-called United National Front they were soon fighting and abusing each other with fury and passion reminiscent of the interwar years.

In spite of their electoral defeat the Communists, by clever and daring manipulation of their own and due to the ineptness, timidity and inexperience of the Democratic politicians were able to exert a decisive influence on the course of political events in Slovakia. They still retained the control of powerful organizations and pressure groups (trade unions, farmers' organizations, partisans, etc.). Thus they were able to frustrate almost any attempt of the Democratic Party to honour its promises given to the Catholic voters.⁷⁷ By their bullying tactics they brought about the estrangement between the leadership and membership of the Democratic Party. They accused many Democratic Party leaders of fascist conspiracy and subversive activity, demanded and got their removal from office and subsequent imprisonment (Kempný, Bugár, Staško, Ursíny, etc.).

Then in November 1947 they attacked the governmental positions of the Democratic Party, compelling it to give up

75) In the Czech lands the Communists received 38.9% and the Social Democrats 15.8% of the votes. The Marxist parties thus obtained 54.7%.

76) M. Vartíková, *Roky rozhodnutia. K dejinám politického boja pred februárom 1948* (Bratislava, 1962); J. Lettrich, *History of Modern Slovakia* (New York, 1955), pp. 247-253.

77) They engineered—with the help of their Czech comrades and colleagues—the sentencing and execution of the former President of Slovakia, Dr. Jozef Tiso. By this they completely discredited the Democratic Party in the eyes of its voters, fully revealing its impotency and helplessness as a political force. See: F. Vnuk, *Dr. Jozef Tiso, President of the Slovak Republic* (Sydney, 1967), pp. 37-40.

its majority in such administrative bodies as the Slovak National Council, the Board of Commissioners, etc.⁷⁸ By this victory the Communists effectively undermined the morale of the non-Communist forces and the stage was set for a complete take-over.

The notorious 'coup d'etat', by which the Communists came to power in Czecho-Slovakia in February 1948, was largely a Czech affair. The resignation of the non-Communist ministers and the ensuing governmental crisis were confined to Prague. The confrontation was staged and the struggle was lost by the Czechs in the Czech lands.⁷⁹ As far as Slovakia was concerned there the issue was solved almost inaudibly in a matter of hours (long before the crisis was over in Prague). The Communist chairman of the Board of Commissioners, G. Husák, took over the main Post Office building in Bratislava on February 23rd, 1948 and was in complete control of all postal services, especially the vital telecommunication links between Bratislava and Prague. To all Democratic Commissioners he dispatched letters of dismissal and to make sure that they took notice, he requested the Commissioner of the Interior, M. Ferienčík (nominally a non-party member of the Board), to post police guards at their offices, to keep the "dismissed" Commissioners out.⁸⁰ Then the Communists reconstituted a new Board allocating to themselves 10 (out of 15) positions, giving the remaining ones to their fellow-travellers.⁸¹ This moment signified the zenith of the KSS. What followed afterwards was a steeply descending road leading to the unenviable position of the next two decades (1948-68).

78) In the reconstructed Board of Commissioners the Democratic Party had to share the chairmanship with a Communist and its majority of nine on the Board of 15 Commissioners was reduced to a minority of six.

79) There are many accounts of this "parliamentary take-over" of governmental powers by the Communists. For the losing party's version see e. g. H. Ripka's *Le Coup de Prague* (Paris, 1949), for the winning-side version see e. g. J. Veselý's *Kronika únorových dnů 1948* (Praha, 1958).

80) V. Vagašský, *Komunistická strana Československa* (New York, 1953-roneoed) p. 8.

81) J. Lettrich, *History of Modern Slovakia* (New York, 1955), pp. 259-260.

VI. 1948-1962

With the elimination of the non-Communist opposition there was no longer a need for two Communist Parties in one country. Steps towards the abolition of the KSS were taken on July 26th, 1948, when the Presidium of the KSČ (consisting entirely of Czech Communists) decided:

1. The next meeting of the Central Committee of the KSS shall rule that the KSS ceases to exist as an independent party and become an integral part of the KSČ.

2. The Party organization in Slovakia will still carry the name of KSS.

3. The Central Committee of the KSS shall be subordinated to the Central Committee of the KSČ, it shall act according to its directives and it will implement the policy of the KSČ in Slovakia.⁸²

This decision was promptly implemented on September 28, 1948 when the KSS, obeying the resolution of the Presidium of the KSČ agreed to become "the territorial organization of the unitary KSČ."⁸³ The merger was officially represented as a voluntary act mutually desired by both, and enthusiastically greeted by the Party press as such. But now it is admitted what has been generally known from the start that the Slovak Communists were most unwilling to give up their independence, to take up the status of an unprivileged minority destined to wait for the hand-outs of the senior and none-too-generous partner.

Their fears were well justified but they could do nothing to prevent the inevitable. Thus they became the first victims of the renewed centralism with which the Communist rulers of Czecho-Slovakia were pursuing their new "socialist" policies. Gottwald, Kopecký and their accomplices, the authors and erstwhile advocates of Slovak self-government, almost overnight forgot their earlier pledges. Robust and aggressive centralism was menacingly reflected in the new "Constitution of May 9th" (1948). In it the Slovaks were treated badly,⁸⁴ yet worse was still to come.

82) K. Kaplán, *Utváření generální linie výstavby socialismu v Československu* (Praha, 1965), p. 103.

83) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), p. 540.

84) While in 1945 the Commissioners were chosen by the Slovak National Council and responsible to it, in 1948 they were appointed by

Most of those political and national rights which—as claimed by the KSS—were secured by the Slovak uprising in 1944 and saved by the victory of the working-class in 1948 were gradually removed one by one by the same people who once fought for them. With incredible, even gleeful, outward obedience the Slovak Communists were curtailing their own rights, restricting their own freedom of action.

This subordinate relationship which now existed between the KSS and KSČ was subsequently written into the Party Statutes for everybody to see. According to these approved rules “the KSS directs its activities by the decisions of the Congress of the KSČ and the decisions of the Central Committee of the KSČ . . . The KSS convokes its congress after agreement with the Central Committee of the KSČ . . . The Central Committee of the KSS carries out the decisions of the Central Committee of the KSČ and with the approval of the Central Committee of the KSČ it solves the political and organizational Party questions in Slovakia”.⁸⁵

Committed to these rules and bound by Party discipline the Communists in Slovakia ruthlessly applied the general Party line as drawn up in Prague by the Central Committee of the KSČ, and including such unpopular measures as collectivization of farming, nationalization of all sectors of private enterprise, down to small shops and one-man businesses, wholesale purge of public life of all real and imaginary opponents of Communism, cruel persecution of the Catholic Church, its clergy and religious, victimization

the Prague Government. The protective measures introduced in 1945 to safeguard the rights of the Slovak against the Czech majority were all removed in 1948. To pass or amend legislation a mere three-fifths majority of deputies was required. The Czech majority in the Parliament was always higher than this. (In 1954 there were only 98 Slovaks among 368 deputies).

- 85) *The Statutes of the KSČ*, paragraphs 40, 42 and 47. See: Pravda of December 20th, 1952.

Numerically the Party drew noticeably less strength from Slovakia than from the Czech lands. Shortly after the 1948 merger statistics were issued showing that in 1949 out of 2,311,066 members and candidates of the KSČ only 236,432 were from Slovakia, i. e. 10.3%. (Rudé právo of May 27th, 1950). This disparity continued into the fifties and at the Tenth Congress of the KSČ (1954) the Slovak delegates formed a 10.2% minority (Pravda of June 16th, 1954). At that time 28% of the population lived in Slovakia.

of the intellectuals, adulation of Stalin and Gottwald, indiscriminate application of "superior Soviet methods" in all walks of life, etc.⁸⁶ And when they did all these repugnant and hate-fomenting tasks their Czech masters struck them with a wave of bloody purges. In the years 1949-54 (and especially after the Ninth Congress of the KSS in May 1950) the ranks of the Slovak Communists were decimated with a fury of terror which in its scope and horror surpassed all the blows ever inflicted by their class enemy.

The purges form the most tragic and most neglected chapter in the history of the KSS.⁸⁷ Within five years (1949-54) the KSS lost in purges seven out of 13 members of its Presidium (Clementis, Husák, Novomeský, Šmidke, Bašťovanský, Falt'an and Moškovič), some 30% of its 60-members Central Committee and thousands of Party members in diplomatic and administrative service, in the army, political bodies, institutions and other sectors of public life. They were removed from their posts amid the curses of their own comrades and comrades-in-arms and, having previously antagonized the masses of the Slovak people, they found themselves unpitied and friendless in their gravest hour. They were declared "enemies of the people", their work was debased, their publications banned, their past exorcised from the pages of the Party history.⁸⁸

The principal guilt of which all the Slovak victims of the purges were accused was the unpardonable sin of "bourgeois nationalism", the very thing in which they were so much encouraged by their Czech comrades in 1945-6. It is generally not realized that the bulk of the victims of the 1949-54 purges were "bourgeois nationalists" (i. e.

86) In the writings of contemporary Communist historians all these measures were described as being socialist, progressive and to the benefit of the masses. Only now, after 15 years, some "mistakes" are being admitted for which the personality cult is blamed.

87) The purges were strictly taboo to the socialist historians until January 1968. Only in the field of literature a cautious attempt has been made to deal with this touchy subject, e. g. in Mňačko's *Oneskorené reportáže*, in Karvaš's *Jazva*, etc.

88) More about the purges can be found in D. A. Schmidt's *Anatomy of a Satellite* (Boston, 1952), in Vnuk's *Čistky — nezahojiteľné rany KSS* (Slovák v Amerike, November 9th,—30th, 1966); also *Der Slánský-Prozess und seine Folgen* (Recht im Ost und West, 5/1964, pp. 196-203).

Slovaks) in Slovakia and "zionists" (i. e. Jews) in the Czech lands, though these two groups did not account for more than 13% of the KSČ membership. It is no wonder then that the purges permanently poisoned the already strained Slovak-Czech relations beyond any hope of reconciliation. After the elimination of the Slovak element the Central Committee of the KSČ entrusted the reins of the KSS to people of its own choice: Široký, Bacílek, Ďuriš, Dávid, Dubček, Rais, Bránik, Šefránek, Mauer, etc. As in the early twenties most of these were of non-Slovak origin (Czechs and Jews) and a few of them were even Soviet citizens (Dávid, Mauer).

In March 1953 Stalin died and shortly after him K. Gottwald. The presidency of the Republic passed on to A. Zápotocký, while a well-known Slovakophobe, A. Novotný, became the first Party secretary. Novotný soon concentrated in his hands immense power and, assisted by V. Kopecký, was able to suppress all the liberalising tendencies of the post-Stalin thaw.⁸⁹

Having thus delayed destalinization which was sweeping through Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union, Novotný paid increased attention to Slovakia where the dangers to his policies were greatest. In an attempt to subdue the passive resistance of the Slovaks and to break the nationalist spirit pulsating there in spite of purges, expulsions and bolshevist vigilance, Novotný further tightened the screw of Czech centralism. He introduced new administrative steps aimed at a more thorough control and reorganized the existing economic, cultural and social structure of the country. In this reorganization several Slovak industrial enterprises and cultural associations lost even their nominal independence and were integrated with their Czech counterparts into more compact "Czechoslovak" bodies.⁹⁰

89) Kopecký's version of how the Party fought and defeated "revisionism" among the intellectuals is graphically, though one-sidedly, described in his book, *ČSR a KSČ* (Praha, 1960), pp. 467-470.

90) These moves were allegedly designed for reasons of higher efficiency but the uneasy reluctance with which they were accepted in Slovakia indicates their insidious nature. Their implementation led to the dismissal of the President of the Slovak National Council, Š. Šebesta, and to renewed attacks on Slovak separatism by Bacílek, Kopecký, David, etc.

With regard to the Slovak political and administrative organs these were doomed to wither away by a devious method of ignoring their very existence. In spite of the fact that the Slovak regional organs were staffed by trusted Party members they were gradually reduced to complete inactivity. Though the Government was constitutionally obliged to appoint a Commissioner when new ministries were created, this provision was, as a rule, ignored.⁹¹ Under the mask of "Czechoslovak socialist patriotism" a new brand of undiluted Czech nationalism was superimposed on these centralist tendencies. Any opposition to this socialist Czechoslovakism was decried as bourgeois nationalism and one can see how often these accusations were levelled against the Slovaks after 1954.⁹²

In an arrogant disregard of Slovak national aspirations the constitution which in May 1960 proclaimed Czechoslovakia "a socialist country" further stripped the power of Slovakia's provincial government organs subordinating them completely to the Central Government.⁹³

This outrageous arrangement was presented as a final and satisfactory solution of the Slovak problem and the Party boasted in its official history that it had accomplished what the old capitalist system had found insoluble.⁹⁴ However, the Slovak feelings about the situation are more aptly

91) E. Táboriský, *Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948-1960* (Princeton, N. J., 1961), pp. 340-344.

92) V. Široký complained about it at the Tenth Congress of the KSS in April 1955; it was deplored in a leading article in *Pravda* of May 1st, 1956; in the aftermath of the Budapest revolt it was ruefully admitted "one of the weakest sectors of our ideological struggle is the struggle against bourgeois nationalism", *Pravda* of December 14th, 1956); in January 1958 it was violently denounced by K. Bacílek as having penetrated "into various fields of our cultural, political and scientific life, sports, state apparatus, economic organs, etc." *Pravda* of January 10th and 11th, 1958); again by K. Bacílek and V. Kopecký at the Eleventh Congress of the KSS in April 1958; etc. See also: *Slovak Nationalism Revisited* (Radio Free Europe Papers of November 11, 1965).

93) The Slovak Commissioners must "attend to further tasks in the economic and cultural construction of Slovakia to the extent determined by the central government" (Táboriský, *Communism in Czechoslovakia 1948-1960* [Princeton, N. J., 1961], p. 339).

94) *Dějiny KSČ* (Praha, 1961), pp. 697-698.

summed up in the words of the former member of the Secretariat of the KSS and Party historian, M. Gosiorovský:

By the new adjustments of the Slovak national organs (which led to the abolishment of the Board of Commissioners, to the subordination of Slovak national offices directly to the Ministries in Prague, etc.) the Slovak nation found itself in the position of the only nation in the entire Socialist camp which on its own ethnic territory lacked such organs of the Socialist governmental administration which would correspond to its development, its present living standard, its numerical strength and, above all, to its indispensability to become really and in every respect an equal partner with the brotherly Czech nation.⁹⁵

VII. 1962-1967

Misruled and unrepresented, the Slovak Communists resented the continuous Czech interference, the Socialist brand of "Czechoslovakism" and above all the persistence of Stalinist methods and Stalinist leadership to which they were subjected. But there was little they could do about it while the Party was strong and enjoyed Khrushchev's support.⁹⁶ But in 1961-62 the Party's grip on the overall control started to slacken. There were several factors which contributed to this: the stagnation of the country's economy, the Sino-Soviet dispute which now broke into the open, renewed attacks on Stalin at the XXIInd Soviet Party Congress (October 1961).

In the ideological split the KSČ had no choice but to side with Moscow. Thus circumstances compelled it to do more than pay lip service to the cause of destalinization. Destalinization finally reached Czecho-Slovakia in 1962-3 and its advent was symbolically ushered in by the demolition of the huge statue of Stalin overlooking Prague (November 1962).

The year 1962, the year of the XIIth Congress of the KSČ, was also a year of intense ferment, especially in

95) M. Gosiorovský, *K niektorým otázkam vzťahu Čechov a Slovákov v politike KSČ*, in *Historický časopis*, No. 3/1968, p. 391.

96) Khrushchev's endorsement of the Party's Stalinist policies in 1957 was a very serious drawback for the opposing forces in the KSS who disliked Kopecký and Novotný's stiff measures against the Slovaks. Khrushchev on the occasion of his visit to Czecho-Slovakia declared (on July 11th, 1957): "The cause of Leninism in Czecho-Slovakia is in good hands." (*East Europe*, 9/1957, p.41).

Slovakia where the pent-up grievances gave rise to outspoken criticism of the excesses of the Stalinist era and of their perpetrators. The loudest critics of these abuses of naked power were the Slovak writers, journalists, scientists and other representatives of the intelligentsia.⁹⁷

The foremost task of destalinization was to rehabilitate the victims of the 1949-54 purges. Those bourgeois nationalists who were still alive were quietly released from prisons, but Novotný and his clique were most reluctant to admit that the accusations of bourgeois nationalism were fabricated. Such an admission would make fabricators of Novotný, Široký and most of the power-holders in Czechoslovakia. Subjected to mounting pressure the Party allowed the released prisoners to apply for re-admission to Party membership. Many of them did and their applications for re-admission read like the most savage condemnation of Communist tyranny ever written.⁹⁸ These were widely cir-

97) The mouthpiece of the discontented and critical voice was the official organ of the Slovak Writers' Association, *Kultúrny život*, which in 1963 published an impressive number of critical articles. An open forum at which many abuses and horrors of the past and of the present were exposed was the Conference of Slovak Writers in Bratislava (April 21-22nd, 1963). At the First Congress of the Association of Slovak Journalists (May 28-29th, 1963) the wrongs and injustices of the era were bitterly denounced by M. Hysko, who publicly attacked the then Prime Minister, V. Široký, as the prime mover behind the false accusations of the "bourgeois nationalist" comrades, (*Pravda* of June 3rd 1963).

98) Some of them (e. g. Husák's) found their way abroad, where extracts from them were published in the emigré press. For English translation of parts from Husák's application see: *News Digest International* (Sydney) 3/1966, pp. 55-57. In 1968 a large number of rehabilitated Party officials (as well as many non-Party men) described their experiences at the hands of their jailers. Husák's account was serialized in a weekly, *Nové slovo*, Holdoš's in the daily, *Smena*, but the most graphic exposé of the inhuman treatment to which the victims of the cult era were subjected is in E. Loeb's book *Svedectvo o procese s vedením protištátného sprisahaneckého centra na čele s Rudolfom Slanským* (Bratislava, 1968). From among the non-Communist prisoners there is the account by playwright I. Stodola in *Kultúrny život* and that of military officer D. Viest in *Slovenské Pohľady*. Different organizations and institutions started to publish grim statistics about the era of lawlessness. According to various calculations there were 160 death sentences in 1948-53. The Association of Anti-Fascist Fighters claimed that 30,000-40,000 of its members became victims

culated in Slovakia and their impact was enormous. At one stage they caused an open rebellion against Czech rule. Novotný tried to counteract these outbursts of discontent and criticism but his voice was drowned in an ever-growing protest.⁹⁹ To save his own skin he had to sacrifice his most valuable accomplices (and the most hated men in Slovakia) namely K. Bacílek (in March 1963), and when that did not suffice, V. Široký and J. Ďuriš (in September 1963).

Of course the situation was far more serious than could be rectified by the removal of a few compromised Party officials. The main culprit, A. Novotný, and his group weathered the storm of criticism by sheer perseverance and stubbornness and with Moscow's backing retained their monopoly of power.

At the end of 1963 the situation in the KSS differed only very little from that before the XIIth Party Congress. The leadership of the KSS was entirely in the hands of Novotný's men, like Biľák, Chudík, Sabolčík, Lenárt, Šalgovič, Barbírek, Dvorský, Cvik, Daubner, etc. In his selection Novotný was particularly careful to pick for his service people whose only qualification was blind following of the official Party line. No person of independent views or strong personal conviction made his way up the Party ladder.

The most pathetic group in the Slovak political scene were the rehabilitated bourgeois nationalists. Though exonerated from their alleged crimes and officially "fully

of judicial and political persecution. The unlawfully sentenced citizens even founded their own organization "K 231". But the most moving (and damning) indictment of the cruelty of the Communist regime was the Resolution of the members of various religious orders presented to the Ministry of Culture and Information on April 17, 1968. It was signed by 6,174 religious who spent altogether 32,016 years in prison. (See *Katolícke noviny*, May 5, 1968).

- 99) Novotný replied to the criticism of the Slovak Communist intellectuals on June 12th, 1963 at Košice. He defended Široký, maintaining that the accusations of bourgeois nationalism were "substantially right" (*Pravda* of June 13th, 1963). He sharply reprimanded and vilified two Slovak critics of his policies, M. Hysko and R. Kaliský, branding them as "irresponsible scribblers" (*pisalkové*). R. Kaliský replied in kind and his long letter (of 30 pages) to "comrade President" lists a comprehensive catalogue of Czech wrongdoings towards the Slovaks. This letter was also widely read in Slovakia and heartily approved by all sections of the community.

rehabilitated" they still were doomed to remain in a political wilderness, hoping against hope for some miracle which would restore their earlier status. Their hopes could not have been realized without a major upheaval within the Party. They were, after all, striving and clamouring after positions which were held by their former judges and jailers, by men who had advanced literally over their "dead bodies". These men knew only too well to whom they owed their posts and what was expected of them in return. This state of affairs could not have been without impact on the Party's membership. Headed by uninspiring and subservient leaders, the KSS had become a living mockery of Lenin's conception of a Communist Party.

The solution of the Slovak problem in 1962-67 advanced very little, if at all. The request of the Slovak intellectuals to federate Czecho-Slovakia according to the Soviet or Yugoslav model was rejected outright.¹⁰⁰ The Czechs were the dominant nation in a state "of two brotherly nations of equal rights" (as it is solemnly written in the 1960 Constitution) and continued to enjoy a disproportionately high number of prestige-bearing positions in the Party organs, State administration, diplomatic service, army, etc. The dissatisfaction in all strata of the Slovak community was there for everybody to see. If any concessions were made, these were only formal and completely unsatisfactory. Thus in 1964 the term "povereník" (Commissioner), abolished in 1960, was reintroduced and in a common declaration of the Central Committee of both Parties (i. e. KSČ and KSS) of May 7, 1964 it was announced that the Slovak National Council would participate "more fully" in all spheres of Slovak public life.¹⁰¹ But there was no visible improvement, no advancement towards a fuller participation of regional organs in Slovakia's administration.

In spite of all this crude nationalistic discrimination, in spite of obvious economic, political and cultural failures,

100) This proposal, the authorship of which is attributed to an erstwhile Party historian, M. Gosiorovský, was rejected by Prague through its Slovak mouthpiece, M. Chudík (President of the Slovak National Council. According to Chudík the Slovak people did not wish any federation (*Rudé právo* of November 13th, 1965).

101) *Za plnšie uplatnenie Slovenskej národnej rady*, (Bratislava, 1964).

Novotný somehow managed to retain and even consolidate his personal power at the XIIIth Party Congress (May-June, 1966). The Congress was a rather dull and uneventful affair: only those speakers were admitted who endorsed Novotný's policies. A lengthy and critical report on the economic situation and the much talked-about "new economic model" was to be delivered by Prof. O. Šík, but what finally emerged was a very mild substitute. The Central Committee elected a 10-man Party Presidium, in which there were three Slovaks (Dubček, Lenárt, Chudík). Among the Presidium candidates there were two more Slovaks (Sabolčík and Sádovský). The promised and expected reform which was to put Slovak-Czech relations on an entirely new basis did not materialize.¹⁰²

VIII. 1967-1968

The situation had become unbearable by 1967. The forces of discontent were gathering momentum. Up to 1966-7 the main source of opposition to the Novotný regime was in Slovakia, where his treatment of the Slovak peoples and institutions provoked almost universal hatred. This resentment was gradually percolating into the all-state Party leadership. In 1967 Novotný's obstinacy to the "new economic model" caused further polarization of the leadership into the "dogmatists" and the "liberals".

The economic reform could succeed only if coupled with decentralization and with a loosening of the tight dictatorial regime. Any relaxation on the political front immediately brought forward a demand for a thorough-going rehabilitation and undoing of the "mistakes of the cult era". The combined impact of these factors (i. e. the Slovak question, economy and uneasy liberalization) eventually led to the fall of A. Novotný.

These grumblings came first to the attention of the outside world in June 1967, when the writers used their IVth Congress as a tribunal for a passionate denunciation

102) The Slovak writer, V. Mihálik (member of the Central Committee of the KSS) revealed (in *Kultúrny život* 8/1966, p. 1) that the Party was preparing "an important document" aimed at the improvement in Slovak-Czech relations. The document was to be tabled at the Thirteenth Congress of the KSČ (May, 1966). But it was not, and nothing has been heard about it since.

of naked power and for a bitter condemnation of the Party's performance in the last two decades.¹⁰³

The Party—always very sensitive to criticism—hit back hard in Oct. 1967. The principal culprits were expelled from the Party, dismissed from their professional posts, and their official journal, "Literární noviny", was taken away from them. An attempt was made to exploit the existing difference between the Slovak and Czech writers and to play both groups against each other. But the Slovaks, at their meeting with the Slovak Party leaders on Oct. 16, 1967, briskly declined the honour of being the Party's favourites at the expense of their Czech colleagues.¹⁰⁴

Another indication of the stresses and strains at the top was the criticism at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the KSČ in Sept. 1967 of the implementation of the new economic model. It was, perhaps, symptomatic that the Slovak Party Secretary, A. Dubček, accused the government of discriminatory policies towards Slovakia. He charged that "the results for the first half of 1967 show that investments in Slovak industry totalled 21.9% of the state investments and not 28% as was laid in the directives of the XIIIth Party Congress".¹⁰⁵

The struggle for power was now on and manifested itself again at the Central Committee meeting in Oct. 1967, where the Slovak Party leaders in an unheard-of move demanded that Novotný abandon one of the two top functions he held (i. e. the First Party Secretary and the President of the State). Novotný sensed the gravity of the

103) See IV. Sjezd Svazu československých spisovatelů, Praha 27. - 29. června 1967, (Praha, 1968), especially the speeches by M. Kundera (pp. 22-27), P. Kohout (pp. 39-43), A. J. Liehm (pp. 99-204) and, above all, that of L. Vaculík (pp. 141-150). The Slovak writers played a rather passive role at this gathering and their over-all performance was to become a source of serious embarrassment in the subsequent months. A heated dispute about the action of some Slovak writers (Mihálik, Špitzer, Válek, Mináč, Kostra, Matúška, Rosenbaum, Egri, Luknár, Poničan as well as 9 Czech writers) who in their letter supported the party's policies in the cultural sphere (pp. 157-159) eventually led (in December 1968) to the collapse of the Slovak Writers' Union. See M. Resutík *Rozlomený sváz* in *Nové slovo* No. 1/1969, p. 11.

104) *Svědectví* (Paris) No. 32-33/1968, pp. 89-116.

105) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Sept. 29, 1967.

situation and in December he invited Brezhnev to come to Prague to bolster his position.

But Brezhnev's visit (Dec. 8)—if anything—made the situation worse. The next meeting of the Central Committee (Dec. 19-21, 1967) dealt Novotný the final blow and made his position untenable. At the following meeting of the Central Committee, a fortnight later, Novotný was finally voted out of office and replaced by Alexander Dubček, who till then was considered Novotný's man in Slovakia. Outside his native Slovakia Dubček was a completely unknown personality.¹⁰⁶

The key role—and this should be stressed again and again—in Novotný's downfall was played by the Slovaks who found themselves in their socialist homeland economically exploited, nationally humiliated, culturally neglected and ruled as a colony by their Czech partners. Novotný, in his last speech as Party Secretary (New Year's speech, 1968), tried to placate the Slovaks with the promise of a more generous economic consideration for Slovakia: "The need of nationwide industrial development must not obscure the important task of priority development of Slovakia which still has not reached the average economic level of the Czech regions".¹⁰⁷ But the offer was "too little too late".

The new leadership of the KSČ put the question of Slovakia as the number one problem to be tackled by them. Prague radio said on Jan. 5, 1968: "The Central Committee took note of the fact that the government and the Presidium of the Slovak National Council will submit to the Party organs, on the basis of thorough situation analyses, specific proposals for perfecting their activities." The activities of the Slovak National Council being almost non-existent needed much more than perfecting.

In his speech at the 20th anniversary of the Communist coup of February 1948, Dubček spelt out the current difficulties which were troubling his leadership: "Many faults

106) For background to Dubček's personality see, e. g. F. Vnuk, *Alexander Dubček — tragédia poctivého komunistu* in *Kalendár Jednota 1969* (Middletown, Pa., 1968), pp. 173-181. Also T. Szulc, *A look at Alexander Dubček — the aparatchik who made a revolution* in *N. Y. Times (Weekly Review)*, Jan. 12, 1969.

107) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Jan. 2, 1968.

have occurred in internal Party life . . . (where) the struggle between the progressive and conservative forces has not yet been concluded . . . (There are) serious difficulties in the economy . . . In our relations with the Slovak national organs we must rectify what was wrongfully violated after 1960 and things must be rearranged in such a way as to bring them in line with the contemporary stage of development of the state as a whole."¹⁰⁸

After this admission from the highest Party official things in Slovakia started to happen. M. Chudík (member of the Presidium of the KSČ), Novotný's stooge in Slovakia who was acting as Chairman of the Slovak National Council, hurriedly submitted his resignation. But he was not to be allowed to bow out as gracefully as that; he was dismissed in ignominy instead, on March 14, 1968. Having discarded its incompetent boss the Slovak National Council immediately published a resolution demanding that Czecho-Slovakia become a federation. A new constitution to replace the one of 1960 was to give full legislative power to the Slovak National Council in all except foreign affairs, defense and state finances. Slovakia was to have a separate government.¹⁰⁹

In March the so-called "Czecho-Slovak spring" really started and the whole country was undergoing radical changes. Novotný's Party apparatus was falling to pieces. There was the defection to the West of Major-General Jan Šejna; the resignation of the Trade Unions leader Pastýřik; the dismissal of Chudík; the removal from office of the Interior Minister Kudrna and Prosecutor-General Bartůška; the suicide of Deputy Defense Minister V. Janko and Vice-President of the Supreme Court J. Brešťanský; ousting of the chief Party ideologue J. Hendrych and the fall from the Presidency of Novotný himself. All this happened in the space of four weeks and had tremendous impact on the people.

These events necessitated a new reorganization of the Party and the government. The five-day session of the Central Committee of the KSČ named a new Presidium on April 1, 1968, in which Slovakia was given the largest

108) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Feb. 23, 1968.

109) *Pravda* (Bratislava), March 15, 1968.

representation ever: 4 in 11.¹¹⁰ In the Secretariat there were 3 Slovaks out of 9 members (Dubček—the First Secretary, Lenárt, Sádovský). On April 9 a new Cabinet was sworn in by Novotný's successor in the Presidency, General L. Svoboda. At the head of the new government stood O. Černík. There were 5 deputy Prime Ministers and 23 Ministers. Here too the Slovaks were treated much more generously than ever before: 2 deputy Prime Ministers and 6 Ministers were from Slovakia. One of the deputy Prime Ministers was Gustáv Husák, a rehabilitated Slovak "bourgeois nationalist".

On April 10, 1968 the Party published its "Action Program",¹¹¹ an ambitious document setting out "Czechoslovakia's road towards socialism" and outlining the political and economic reforms by which it was to achieve one-party rule, mollified by the active participation of the non-party sections of the population. The Slovak question again figured prominently in the Program. A new symmetric federative arrangement of the state was proposed and the Slovaks were promised: 1. Slovak National Council and Council of Ministers (instead of the old Board of Commissioners), 2. Slovak national committees, 3. Autonomy in planning and budgeting for Slovakia, 4. State secretaries in those central ministerial departments where Ministers were Czechs, 5. Guarantee of Slovak rights against the Czech majority, 6. Adequate Slovak representation in the army, diplomatic service, etc.¹¹²

In the less oppressive atmosphere of the day and in the absence of overt censorship public opinion soon started to exert pressure from below. This resulted first of all in the resignation or removal from the scene of those men who were closely linked with Novotný and his dictatorial policies. To purge Novotný's followers from the Central

110) They were Dubček, Rigo, Biľak and Barbírek. Their nomination was accepted in Slovakia with some scepticism and their credentials as Slovaks were immediately questioned. It was pointed out that Rigo was a Gypsy, Biľak was a Ruthenian and Barbírek — though born in Bratislava—was a Czech. And, of course, everybody knew that Dubček had spent his childhood and adolescence (1924-38) in the Soviet Union.

111) *Akční Program KSČ přijatý na plenární zasedání ÚV KSČ dne 5. dubna 1968*, Praha 1968.

112) *Akční Program . . .*, pp. 27-28.

Committee of the KSČ the masses demanded an extraordinary Party congress. Under the effect of ever-mounting pressure the Party leaders with some reluctance consented at last to convene it in September 1968.

In Slovakia the burning question was that of federation. Obsession with this issue was so intense that little room was left for anything else. There was a minor controversy between two groups of Slovak intellectuals as to whether it was more correct to insist on federation before democratization or vice versa. This was, however, only a question of emphasis: the demand for federalization was almost unanimous. In the Czech lands the problem of federalization was hardly mentioned, and if at all, then not in a manner encouraging for the Slovaks. A public opinion poll revealed that 95% of Slovaks were for federation and 90% of Czechs against it.¹¹³ The Czechs did not like to be reminded that federation was something the Slovaks were promised more than once in the past 50 years and hence long overdue. They preferred to dismiss the whole thing as an unrealistic and untimely affair of no concern to themselves. The famous "2000 words Manifesto" even suggested that in Slovakia the federation issue would be used as a shield by many old conservatives who would thus survive the democratization process: "Federation alone will not provide better living standards for either the Czechs or Slovaks, neither will it solve their economic and social problems. The rule of the Party-state bureaucracy may still survive especially in Slovakia, because there it could claim a victory in the fight by which greater freedom was gained (for the Slovaks)."¹¹⁴

113) There were several surveys of public opinion on this issue. *Obrana ľudu* (June 1, 1968) cites the results of another survey, according to which the Slovaks were for federation "almost 100%", while in the Czech lands federation was favored by only 5% of those questioned!

114) For the full text of this Manifesto see *Literární Listy* (June 27, 1968). The Soviet press called "2000 words" an "action program for the counter-revolution" (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, July 10, 1968), Dubček deplored it as a "very serious obstacle to the further development of socialist democracy and society" (*Rudé právo*, June 29, 1968), S. Kodaj (Party official in East Slovakia) denounced it as "an open call for counter-revolution". In fact it was a call for pressure from below to get the Party to purge from

This unkind remark in a document which so outraged the Soviet leaders and embarrassed the Communist leaders in Czecho-Slovakia, elicited a reply in the form of an open letter signed by over 200 Slovak intellectuals and intitled, "A word to the Czechs, and also Slovaks, who are worthy of it". In this response the Slovaks complained bitterly about the outrageous distortion of Slovak history by Czech officialdom ("From Štúr's followers down to the men who led the uprising of 1944 nobody was good enough if he was a good Slovak first") and then defended their insistence on "federation without delay": "In today's democratization process the present inferior position of Slovakia is simply no longer tenable".¹¹⁵ No prominent political personality figured among those who signed the letter, yet the Czechs suspected that its instigator was Dr. Gustáv Husák.

The Deputy Prime Minister G. Husák was the most dynamic personality in the reactivated life of the KSS.¹¹⁶ He re-emerged (after being sentenced to life imprisonment as a "bourgeois nationalist" in 1954) as a sworn enemy of Novotný and all his hangers-on in Slovakia. At the same time he was resolved to reassert as much an independent Slovak voice in the state and Party politics as possible. He still remained what he always had been, an orthodox and autocratic Communist at heart, but his hatred of Novotný put him in the one camp with the liberals. His uncompromising stand on immediate and comprehensive federalization assured him of a strong following in Slovakia. He was not even a member of the Central Committee of the KSS, yet his political influence in Slovakia was second to none. Early in July he swayed the regional Party conference in Bratislava to press for the KSS congress to be held in August 1968 (i.e. before the scheduled KSČ Congress) so that the Slovaks would come to the XIVth extraordinary Congress of the KSČ with their own specific

all positions of power the men who had been responsible for the country's political, economic, moral and cultural decline. For the English translation of the whole document see *East Europe* No. 8/1968, pp. 25-28.

115) *Slovo Čechom aj Slovákom súcim na slovo* in *Nové slovo*, No. 11/1968, pp. 1-3.

116) For a short biography of G. Husák read F. Vnuk's *O Husákoví znova a viacej* in *Kalendár Jednota 1968*, (Middletown, Pa., 1967, pp. 87-98).

proposals (already approved by the KSS Congress) of the federalization scheme.¹¹⁷

The internal development in Czecho-Slovakia since January and especially since March 1968 was a cause of serious concern in the Soviet Union and neighbouring people's democracies. The events in Czecho-Slovakia were directly connected with the students' demonstrations in Poland which produced a crisis in the Polish Party leadership. Afraid of similar consequences in East Germany Ulbricht imposed a ban on the German-language newspaper from Czecho-Slovakia. The Ukrainian-language broadcast from Prešov found keen listeners in the south-western part of the Soviet Union and caused uneasiness and discomfort to the Soviet Party leaders, to Ukrainian Party boss Shelest in particular. Dubček and his colleagues were repeatedly summoned to Moscow, Dresden, Warsaw, while their counterparts from the other Socialist countries were arriving in Prague trying their best to stop the process which in Dubček's eyes was democratic and humanizing, in theirs counter-revolutionary and revisionist.

Then on July 15, 1968 the Central Committee of the KSC received a common letter from the "fraternal" Parties of the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria. They found the situation in Czecho-Slovakia "absolutely unacceptable for a socialist country". The catalogue of errors and faults was long and comprehensive and reflected their own fears and apprehensions. Only one aspect of the post-January development in the country was condoned without disapproval: "We welcome the rectification in the relations between the Czechs and Slovaks on a sound basis of brotherly collaboration within the framework of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic".¹¹⁸

The recipients of this "Warsaw letter" did not leave these accusations unanswered and refuted them one by one. In their written reply they stated emphatically: "We do not see any realistic reasons which would entitle you to assert that our present situation should be branded as counter-revolutionary."¹¹⁹ The Party Secretary Dubček went

117) *Pravda* (Bratislava), July 7, 1968.

118) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Special edition, July 18, 1968.

119) *ib.*

on the air to reassure his countrymen (on July 18, 1968): "We do not want to abandon anything at all from our principles."

The outcome of this correspondence was the confrontation between the 11-man Soviet Politburo and the entire 11-man KSČ Presidium at Čierna nad Tisou (July 29 – Aug. 1, 1968), and afterwards the multilateral "comradely" meeting at Bratislava on Aug. 3. The official communiqué was inconclusive and the whole outcome of the conference was rather dubious.¹²⁰ Both participants (i. e. the KSČ on the one hand and the Communist Parties of the USSR, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria on the other) were convinced that they had successfully defended their own tenets of socialism. In a nationwide broadcast Dubček again attempted to calm his fellow citizens: "You can be fully satisfied with the results and the spirit of the talks. We have kept our promises (i. e. not to deviate from the post-January course)." It sounded too good to be true.

For the next 18 days Czecho-Slovakia lived in a fool's paradise, while the Red Army, under the pretext of large-scale manoeuvres, was preparing the invasion of Czecho-Slovakia. On Aug. 20-21, 1968, in defiance of their solemn promises to respect the national independence of every Socialist country, the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact forces of five Communist countries invaded Czecho-Slovakia and put a sudden end to the great democratization experiment. In this gesture of Cain-like brotherhood Communism displayed its fear of democratization, its abhorrence of freedom, its inability to satisfy even the most elementary of human desires. It demonstrated that Communism cannot be liberalized without ceasing to be Communism.

During that fateful night of Aug. 20-21 the progressive leaders of the KSČ were kidnapped and taken in chains to Russia. This high-handed action of the Socialist allies¹²¹ provoked a loud and indignant outcry all over the world, and—most unexpectedly—a resolute condemnation by the majority of the world Communist Parties, including those of China, Yugoslavia, Rumania, France, Italy, Great Britain,

120) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Aug. 4, 1968.

121) *A Chronology of Occupation in East Europe*, No. 10/1968, pp. 38-46.

Australia, etc. But by far the most effective was the reaction the Soviets encountered in the occupied country. It is impossible to describe in detail the ingenious methods of the passive and less passive resistance by which the Slovaks and Czechs frustrated the occupiers' efforts to "normalize the situation". The invasion united the Czech and Slovak nation in their opposition to this cruel act. But it appears that there was much less unity of action in the Party ranks. The KSS refused to back unconditionally the activities of the KSČ in the first post-invasion days.

The XIVth extraordinary Congress of the KSČ, scheduled for Sept. 9 was hurriedly convened and took place during the night of Aug. 22 under the very nose of the occupying troops in a big Prague factory (ČKD plant). The delegates (1095 out of 1543 expected to attend) elected a new Committee of 144 members. Of these 118 were new members and only 26 belonged to the old Central Committee. The representation from Slovakia amounted to 42 members, an unprecedented proportion, and there were 8 Slovaks in the 28-man Presidium: Dubček, Husák, Zrak, Ťažký, Sádovský, Colotka, Turček, Pavlenda, Sámel (?).¹²² This should have satisfied the Slovaks, but it did not.

The Soviets denounced the XIVth Congress in the most violent terms and did their utmost to undo it. According to Western reports the secret protocol drawn-up at the conclusion of the Czechoslovak-Soviet "negotiations" (*sit venia verbi*) on Aug. 28, 1968 contained 14 demands, one of which asked for the invalidation of the XIVth congress. As it happened this was the first thing the Russians succeeded in obtaining. A key role in making this congress into an "unevent" was played by G. Husák who was one of the negotiators in Moscow. While he was abroad the extraordinary Congress of the KSS started (on Aug. 26). Husák returned just in time to deliver his address on the last day of the session. In his speech he questioned the legality of the XIVth Congress of the KSČ and advised the delegates to the KSS Congress to reverse their stand taken three days earlier and to disavow the XIVth extraordinary Congress of the KSČ. Husák argued that at the XIVth congress the Slovak representatives to the Party

122) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Special edition, Aug. 25, 1968.

organs were elected "illegally" . . . "undemocratically", that "out of 300 Slovak delegates selected to attend the congress proceedings only 4, later 22, and towards the end about 40 were present".¹²³ In complete disregard of the fact that it was the Russians who had prevented the Slovak delegates from participating at the Congress Husák addressed his indignant reproaches at those who elected him to the Party Presidium: "Nobody can impose on a sovereign nation and its party its will in a way we have witnessed, namely that a little group of people entrusted by nobody should determine the nation's political representation."¹²⁴ Of course Husák's anger and fury would have been even greater if the XIVth Congress had failed to nominate him or some of his close associates to the position in the top Party hierarchy. His rhetoric was just a clumsy display of the heads-I-win-tails-you-lose tactics.

In sharp contrast to the XIVth Congress of the KSČ, the Congress of the KSS was allowed to proceed undisturbed. It was attended by 607 of the 638 chosen delegates. It elected a 131-man Central Committee and a 12-member Presidium composed of Husák, Boďa, Falt'an, Harenčár, Klokoč, Lupták, Novomeský, Pavlenda, Sádovský, Sedláková, Ťažký and Zrak. The 7-man Secretariat consisted of G. Husák (First Secretary), L. Abrahám, B. Graca (ideological spokesman), V. Pavlenda, S. Sádovský, J. Turček and J. Zrak. This was an entirely new team personally hand-picked by Husák. All of Novotný's men and Husák's opponents were either ousted (Bil'ak, Sabolčík, Pecho, Riga, Kríž, Hruškovič, Dvorský, etc.) or demoted to ordinary Central Committee membership (Janík, Barbírek, Zupka, etc.).

In the resolution of the Congress the Plenum took a stand on a number of current issues created by the presence of Warsaw Pact troops in Slovakia, but the only problem it tackled with determination and vigour was that of federation. Husák said in his concluding address: "I recommend that we approve . . . our insistence on the federative re-arrangement of our state on the basis of principles outlined earlier and it should be enacted by Oct. 28 this year."¹²⁵ In the subsequent weeks the Slovak Communists pursued this

123) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Aug. 30, 1968.

124) *Smena*, Aug. 30, 1968.

125) *Pravda* (Bratislava), Aug. 30, 1968.

point of their program forcefully and relentlessly to its logical conclusion. The federation was indeed enacted on Oct. 27, 1968 and put into practice on Jan. 1, 1969. Today's Czecho-Slovakia consist of two Socialist republics, the Czech and the Slovak, with three governments, Czech, Slovak and Central. It can be said that federation is the only paragraph salvaged from the ambitious Action program of Dubček's leadership.

The draft of the new Party statutes was published for discussion early in April 1968 and it proposed that the Party too should be reorganized on federal lines.¹²⁶ It envisaged the Communist Party of the Czech lands and the Communist Party of Slovakia to deal with internal and domestic matters; for international representation and in matters which exceeded the limits of national competence there was to be a single representative of the two national parties, i. e. the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia.

This proposition was politely forgotten after August, 1968; the Russians apparently did not like it. (Of course there were many other things the Russians would loathe to see in practice, such as the new concept of democratic centralism, election of all party organs by secret ballot, limited terms of service on regional and national party committees, etc.). Thus whilst the KSS achieved a fundamental alteration in the structure of the state, it was unable to adjust the structural pattern of the Party to fit the new political situation. The KSS is still without counterpart in the Czech lands¹²⁷

However, under Husák's new leadership the KSS has undergone a remarkable revival. In its relation to the KSČ it has become more aggressive and self-assertive. The days of blind obedience of the Party line drawn up in Prague have been replaced by an avowed and dedicated service

126) *Rudé právo*, Supplement, Aug. 10, 1968.

127) At the plenary session of the Central Committee of the KSČS on Nov. 14-17, 1968 a substitute-counterweight to the Central Committee and Presidium of the KSS was set up: the so-called Party's Bureau for the Czech regions. It functions within the framework of the Central Committee of the KSČS, consists of 11 men and is headed by L. Štrougal, assisted by two Secretaries (V. Hula and J. Kozel). The weekly journal "Tribuna" is its official organ. The only better known personality in the Bureau (beside L. Štrougal) is the Prime-Minister Černík.

to the needs of the nation. At least that was what G. Husák proclaimed at the KSS Congress: "Let this Party rid itself of everything which is irresolute, everything which is opportunistic, let endure in it all that is firm, noble and prepared to struggle for the rights of this nation."¹²⁸

It remains to be seen to what extent the KSS will be able to realize this resolve. The strongman Husák was known to have made similar speeches in 1945-48, but after 1948 he was gradually silenced, removed from his Party posts and eventually imprisoned. So far he has succeeded in bringing about federalization of the state, but in the process he has antagonized a few influential groups in Slovakia (liberal writers, journalists, intellectuals) and the majority of the Czech population. He is being depicted in the Western press as a man who enjoys the trust of the Russians, as the man who annulled the XIVth Congress of the KSČ, as the man who was instrumental in the removal of Smrkovský, etc.¹²⁹ The conflict and dialectical contradictions between the Czechs and Slovaks are at present as acute as ever. Federation solved one old problem but generated at least a dozen new ones.

The part played by the KSS in Slovak national history shows too much on the debit side and very little on the credit side. In the years 1948-67 the KSS was without doubt the most powerful single factor in shaping Slovakia's history. Yet in most instances it was a force which, with cynicism and arrogance, stood as a stumbling-block between the nation and its freedom, between the people and their political and cultural self-expression. In those years the KSS was just a tool of terror and intimidation wielded by a foreign oppressor over the Slovak masses. These things were openly stated in many sensational revelations

128) *Smena*, Aug. 30, 1968. A question can be asked at this point as to how much the Party membership will drop if it is going to rid itself of everything which is opportunistic and irresolute and retain only that which is firm and noble. In 1968, just before the Soviet invasion the Party had in Slovakia 220,000 organized members, i. e. less than 6% of the population. If Husák's criteria are applied this number can only decrease.

129) See e. g. the article of L. Vlašič: *Pohyb s čudným pozadím* in *Nové slovo*, No. 1/1969, pp. 3 and 14. Also Husák's speech at the Plenary session of the Central Committee KSČ-S (*Rudé právo*, Jan. 21, 1969, p. 7).

which appeared in the censorship-free press during the March-August period of the Dubček era.

The new leadership of the KSS has repeatedly stated that the return of the old days is out of the question. Yet (apart from federation) one witnesses almost daily a gradual retreat from the gains and achievements of the liberalization process. The presence of Red Army units in the country (now sanctioned by a treaty) makes certain that the conditions imposed on the KSČ leadership on Aug. 28, 1968 are being implemented. How—under these circumstances—will the KSS safeguard the interests of the nation? Time alone will tell.

Appendix I.

Numerical representation from Slovakia in the Central Committee, Presidium-Politburo and Secretariat-Orgburo of the KSČ (including candidates) in 1921-1968.

Party Congress	Members in C. Committee			Members in KSČ Presid.			Members in KSČ. Secr.		
	Total	From Slovakia	%	Total	From Slovakia	%	Total	From Slovakia	%
Merger-Congress (1921)	36	6	16.6	12	0	0.0	--	--	--
I. Congress (1923)	26	5	19.4	8	0	0.0	--	--	--
II. Congress (1924)	50	6	12.0	9	1	11.0	7	0	0.0
III. Congress (1925)	52	6	11.5	9	0	0.0	7	1	14.6
IV. Congress (1927)	52	5	9.6	11	0	0.0	5	0	0.0
from Nov. 1928	?	?	?	15	3	20.0	6	2	33.3
V. Congress (1929)	52	4	7.7	17	1	5.9	5	1	20.0
VI. Congress (1931)	51	4	7.8	10	1	10.0	?	?	?
VII. Congress (1936)	50	8	16.0	12	1	8.3	4	1	25.0
Exile KSČ (Mosc., '38)	?	?	?	7	0	0.0	No		
Exile KSČ Paris, 1939)	?	?	?	3	1	33.3			
Exile KSČ (Mosc., '43)	?	?	?	7	0	0.0	Secretariat		
Post-war KSČ (Koš., '45)	21	10	47.7	7	2	28.6			
VIII. Congress (1946)	101	0	0.0	14	0	0.0	elected		
from July 1948	170?	32	18.8	18	0	0.0			
IX. Congress (1949)	108	22	20.2	21	2	9.5	7	1	14.6
X. Congress (1954)	112	23	20.3	11	2	18.2	6	0	0.0
XI. Congress (1958)	147	33	22.5	15	4	26.6	8	1	12.5
XII. Congress (1962)	147	30	20.4	12	4	33.3	8	1	12.5
XIII. Congress (1966)	166	28	16.8	15	5	33.3	8	0	0.0
from Jan. 1968	?	?	?	19	6	31.5	8	0	0.0
XIV. extraordinary ('68)	144	42	29.2	28	8	28.6	?	?	?
1921-1968	1485	264	17.8	270	41	15.2	79	8	10.1

Appendix II.

The Leadership of the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS).
(The office holders of the top Party positions in 1939-1969)

A. ILLEGAL KSS.

First Committee (March 1939–Aug. 1941): Ľ. Benada, J. Ďuriš, J. Osoha.
Second Committee (Sept. 1941–April 1942): O. Krajňák, J. Osoha, V. Škrabala.

Third Committee (June 1942–July 1942): Š. Dubček, J. Lietavec, J. Osoha.
Fourth Committee (July 1942–March 1943): Š. Bašťovanský, M. Hrušovský.

Fifth Committee (Aug. 1943–Sept. 1944): G. Husák, L. Novomeský, K. Šmidke.

B. KSS IN POWER.*Merger-Congress* (Sept. 1944)

President: K. Šmidke.

Vice-Presidents: G. Husák, J. Čech.

Committee members: K. Bacílek, R. Balco, R. Blažovský, F. Čáp, K. Dolinský, D. Ertl, I. Frička, O. Jeleň, J. Lietavec, J. Mazúr, L. Novomeský, J. Púll, J. Šoltész, M. Smida, J. Szücs, L. Viktorín.

National Conference at Žilina (Aug. 1945)

Presidium — President: V. Široký.

Vice-President: K. Šmidke.

Members: Š. Bašťovanský, J. Ďuriš, L. Holdoš, G. Husák, J. Šoltész, F. Zupka, M. Valachovič.

Secretariat: K. Bacílek, Š. Bašťovanský, L. Holdoš, E. Friš. From Apr. 1946: K. Moškovič.

IX Congress of the KSS (May 1950).

Presidium — President: V. Široký.

First Secretary: Š. Bašťovanský.

Members: K. Bacílek, Ľ. Benada, J. Bránik, M. Čulen, J. Ďuriš, M. Falt'an, K. Moškovič, J. Púll, Š. Rais, E. Sýkora, F. Zupka.

Secretariat (established in Oct. 1951): V. Široký, Š. Bašťovanský, J. Púll, K. Moškovič, M. Gosiorovský. From Dec. 1951 also: P. Dávid and Ľ. Benada.

Xth Congress of the KSS (June 1953).

Presidium: K. Bacílek, Ľ. Benada, J. Bránik, M. Čulen, P. David, M. Falt'an, J. Kríž, A. Michalička, O. Pavlík, J. Púll, R. Strehaj, V. Široký, F. Zupka.

Secretariat: Ľ. Benada, P. Dávid, J. Kríž, A. Michalička, J. Púll.

? Congress of the KSS (April 1955).

Presidium: K. Bacílek, M. Bakula, Ľ. Benada, V. Daubner, P. Dávid, O. Jeleň, P. Majling, R. Strehaj, J. Valo.

Secretariat: K. Bacílek (First Secretary), P. Dávid, J. Kríž, A. Michalička.

Extraordinary Congress of the KSS (April 1957).

Presidium: K. Bacílek, L. Benada, V. Daubner, P. Dávid, M. Chudík,
O. Jeleň, P. Majling, R. Strechaj, J. Valo.

XIth Congress of the KSS (May 1958).

Presidium: K. Bacílek, L. Benada, V. Daubner, P. Dávid, M. Chudík,
O. Jeleň, J. Kríž, P. Majling, J. Valo.

Secretariat: K. Bacílek (First Secretary), P. Dávid, F. Dvorský, J.
Kríž, J. Lenárt.

XIIth Party Congress (Nov. 1962).

Presidium: K. Bacílek, L. Benada, V. Bil'ak, V. Daubner, P. Dávid,
M. Chudík, J. Lenárt, M. Sabolčík.

Secretariat: K. Bacílek (First Secretary till April 1963, when re-
placed by A. Dubček), V. Bil'ak, F. Dvorský, J. Kríž, J. Lenárt.

XIIIth Congress of the KSS (May 1966).

Presidium: F. Barbírek, V. Bil'ak, V. Daubner, A. Dubček, H. Ďurko-
vič, M. Chudík, J. Janík, J. Lörinc, M. Sabolčík. From Jan. 1968
also M. Hruškovič, R. Harenčár, M. Pecho.

Secretariat: A. Dubček (First Secretary till Jan. 1968, when replaced
by V. Bil'ak), J. Janík, M. Sabolčík, J. Zrak.

XIVth Extraordinary Congress of the KSS (Aug. 1968).

Presidium: G. Husák, K. Bod'a, S. Falt'an, R. Harenčár, O. Klokoč,
S. Lupták, L. Novomeský, V. Pavlenda, S. Sádovský, M. Sedláková,
A. Tažký, J. Zrak.

Secretariat: G. Husák (First Secretary), L. Abrahám, B. Graca, V.
Pavlenda, S. Sádovský, J. Turček, J. Zrak.

* * *

THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA as a Christian and democratic organization, is resolutely against the domination and exploitation of the Slovak nation by any other nation or political state; the Slovaks did not want to be ruled over by the Magyars and, today, do not want to be subservient to the Czech nation.

THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA is a CULTURAL and CIVIC organization of Americans of Slovak descent.

THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA wants to help Americans of Slovak descent in American political life, in business or professions, in social standing, and along educational lines.

CURRENT ISSUES

STATEMENT OF THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA

*Presented by Dr. Peter P. Hletko,
Honorary President and a Democrat*

To the Democratic Platform Committee at the International Amphitheater on Friday, August 23, 1968.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Under authorization of our National President, Edward J. Behuncik, of Stratford, Connecticut, I was privileged to be invited to appear before your important body as official spokesman of this largest of Slovak-American civic and cultural organizations. I take this means to let our views be known to you.

Our purpose is to request the Democratic Party to take a clear-cut stand on assistance for the people of Slovakia to obtain their status as an independent state or at least as a partner in the federated country of Czecho-Slovakia, which up to now has never been a federated country since its founding. The principles which we recommend are equally applicable to all small nations, hence can be properly included in a statement of principles such as a Democratic Platform.

It is especially fitting that we present our position not merely because of recent activity in Čierna and Bratislava, both located in Slovakia, but also because we can give the Democratic Party and its next administration the opportunity to show all America and the world that the American people are behind and support the efforts of the Slovaks who, in a realistic sense, are emulating our founding fathers of the American Revolution.

In the past, the position of The Slovak League of America, an American organization founded at Cleveland, Ohio, in May, 1907, was frequently misplaced or purposely misinterpreted. Notwithstanding its long history of patriotic devotion to this great country with thousands of Slovak-Americans serving in the Armed Forces, even as far back as Lincoln's day, and continuing even to this moment at Viet Nam, Germany, and all around the world.

Even today, with Czecho-Slovakia being led for the first time in its history by a Slovak—not a Czech, as the news media picture him—the press continues to write about the doings of the Czechs only. The Czechs are one nationality, the Slovaks another. They have a combined country, but the Czechs hold the upper hand in Czecho-Slovakia. The abbreviation of Czecho-Slovakia is not Czech, but note that the democratization has been underway only since Alexander Dubček, a Slovak, came to power in January. He is not a Czech.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee, we want to ask that our Government, if and when led by a new administration, will give our Slovak compatriots and next-of-kin what is being given by our country and other great powers to other smaller and newer nations—statehood and membership in the family of nations. Moral support of the Slovak Nationalism may well accrue to our benefit if the Slovaks continue to push for democratization and federalization, thereby weakening the strangle hold of the Soviets in Eastern Europe.

The Democratic Party has a golden opportunity as the Party of the People to come out strongly in support of the Slovak right to statehood. I am certain your capable draftsmen can combine our ideas with ideas presented here by other ethnic groups to make a strong and meaningful Plank which will add stature to the Platform, give solace to suffering peoples in small nations everywhere, and, not incidentally but realistically, help elect a Democratic President.

The Slovaks in America have strong societies and an influential press. Therefore, I urge you to embody a Plank as we have suggested. We will do our part thru our societies and our press.

* * *

Hon. Everett McKinley Dirksen
Chairman Platform Committee
Republican Party
Fountainbleau Hotel
Miami Beach, Florida

Recent events in Eastern Europe may well prove the Slovak nation, in the very heart of Europe, to be the tiny spark of moral, cultural, and patriotic dynamism which

will help destroy the Iron Courtain. Democratization in Czecho-Slovakia was initiated by the Slovak intellectuals through whose efforts Slovak leader Alexander Dubček emerge in power. Dubček and his colleagues have already shown a more human approach to Slovakia's problems by pushing a federalization of two states—Slovak and Czech. They also evidence more liberal treatment of populace.

The Slovak League of America, as a civic organization, signed in 1918 known Pittsburgh Pact in which supported a federated Czecho-Slovakia. Today we like to see a confederated Central Europe with Slovakia in it as a equal partner. Seek support for these noble ideal from your great party and urge the inclusion of our position and of other ethnic groups in your Platform.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph Paučo, Secretary
Slovak League of America
July 29, 1968

SLOVAKS WILL NOT GIVE UP

Low-flying jets are buzzing Bratislava as I start to write this report. Tanks and military vehicles keep streaming into the city across the Danube bridge over the street beneath my window. Now and then the burst of machine-gun fire punctuates the rhythmic cheers of the crowd demonstrating in Šafárik Square on the corner.

What began as a month of intense study in Slovak language and culture at Comenius University in a freedom-tasting city came to an abrupt halt with the sudden occupation of the country by Warsaw Pact forces. Linguists from 18 countries, including Iron Curtain satellites, were gathered in the dining hall. We were told that an attempt would be made to continue the institute. Lectures would have to be held in various corners of the dormitory, it was announced, rather than in the lecture hall now completely surrounded by Russian tanks and armored vehicles.

All 105 of us made a feeble attempt to resume our language study. But the instructors and scholars were too upset to concentrate. We crowded into the lounge to watch the TV set and listen to intermittent radio bulletins.

The occupation began late at night. Most of us had gone to sleep after a long day of lectures and a tour.

The few still awake at midnight attributed the steady rumble of military vehicles to possible unusually heavy traffic over the railroad track along the Danube. The airplane noise sounded like some special activity at the airport on the eastern outskirts of the city.

At 3 o'clock in the morning my next-door roommate from Pittsburgh awoke me, saying: "Get up. The Russians have occupied Bratislava."

We went to our windows on both sides of the dormitory, and there below us the streets were clogged with tanks and trucks. The vehicles could move no further, so their drivers got out to smoke.

We ventured out of the building before daybreak to convince ourselves that the nightmare was really happening. There were no Russian stars identifying the vehicles—just a white stripe down the hoods—but our attempts to converse with the drivers soon revealed that they could speak nothing but Russian.

Most Slovaks (and Czechs) have had to study Russian as a second language. This year they were given a choice between Russian and English, and most chose English. Using their knowledge of the invader's tongue, the people of Bratislava questioned the Russians. Most of them seemed to be very young.

"Why did you occupy our country?" they asked a teenage Russian.

"To help the counter revolution," he answered.

"Well, have you found it?" they asked.

Unable to locate even one person who would welcome the occupiers, the soldiers had little to say.

"We're under orders. That's why we're here."

By noon every Russian tank and vehicle was painted or chalk-marked with a swastika (some inside Russian stars), slogans of loyalty to Dubček and Svoboda, and "Go Home" signs in Slovak and Russian.

Radio and TV stations called for a show of loyalty to the captive government in the form of a work stoppage for 2 minutes at noon and the blowing of whistles and horns.

The mood of the populace seemed to have been welded

by the noon-hour display of support. Down the street from the square came about 50 students.

A crowd rapidly gathered behind them and soon filled the square, each corner of which was occupied by a tank. Streets leading to the square were lined with tanks parked diagonally, ready to pull out toward the square if necessary.

At noon the Russian military vehicles were still moving into the city over the bridge and through Šafárik Square. Now they were completely stopped by the mass of nearly 1,000 people refusing to let them through. Civilian traffic was let through the mob by the police, but the police did not lift a finger to open a path for the Russian vehicles.

The people cheered their police for this support. They laughed and applauded as the crowd took one of the police and kept throwing him into the air, a gesture of friendship he enjoyed immensely.

Russian drivers, unable to push through the mob, eventually decided to make a U-turn and drive back over the bridge. Again, cheers from the crowd.

After nearly half an hour of such diversion an armored truck came down the center of the bridge and pushed against the unyielding wall of human flesh. Determined not to play games, the crew fired the large millimeter guns of the armored car into the air, and the crowd fell back.

The truck went through the crowd, and then turned back and drove into the crowd from behind, its guns firing warning volleys into the sky. As young people threw sticks and rocks at the armored car, machine guns went into action, strafing over the heads of the crowd.

When the level reached about six inches above our heads, most of us ran for cover or fell to the street. As we ran, we could see the flags fall to the street. We heard afterward that two young men had been killed.

Later the demonstrators reassembled in the square, drawing more bullets. This time the gunfire killed a 17-year-old girl student standing on the steps of the university administration building just behind a posted tank and anti-aircraft gun.

As we were leaving the city an hour before the 8 o'clock curfew, we read the inscription a bold student had chiseled into the stone pillar of the building: "Here the Russians

killed a 17-year-old Slovak girl." At the base of the column lay a bouquet of flowers and a scarf the girl had worn.

About 30 feet above that inscription there remained another that had already been painted on the stone face of the building before we arrived: "To be lorded over is evil, but to lord it over others is worse." The occupying forces would have done well to learn to read this expression of a united nation's will.

If there had been aloofness toward the Russian "comrades" before, the mood was now one of open disdain.

"The Germans weren't as bad as this," said one of the professors. "We knew at least that they were our enemies; but these people pretended to be our friends."

I asked what they would do. One said what many repeated: "We would rather die than return to the conditions before January (1968, when Dubček began his liberalization)."

As we were encouraged to flee for our own safety—for we still had a free place to go to—the people inspired us with their faith and courage.

The Slovak border guards, who were still in charge of customs when we left, greeted us with smiles. They carried our luggage to the Austrian border gate. There they had a last word for us: "Tell your people we will not give up."

Rev. Jaroslav Vajda, Editor of This Day

THE NEW YORK DECLARATION

The Slovak Liberation Council, gathered in the Americana Hotel, New York, N.Y., on October 27, 1968 in order to discuss the situation of the Slovak Nation within the Czecho-Slovak Republic in general, and under the Soviet occupation in particular, has agreed upon the following statement:

On May 30, 1918 the Slovak League of America on the one hand, and the Czech National Alliance with the Union of Czech Catholics on the other hand signed a document which has become known in history as the Pittsburgh Pact. It was an agreement sponsoring liberation of the Central-European lands of their members' origin. It dealt with constitutional relations to be established between these two Slav nations in the prospective Czecho-Slovak Republic. T. G. Masaryk, Chairman of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, recognized by the

Allied Powers as the Czecho-Slovak Revolutionary Government, in Paris, future President of Czecho-Slovakia, had produced the draft thereof and signed it.

The Pact stipulated that Slovakia would have in the new State her own administration, i.e., her own legislative, executive and judiciary branch of Government, while Foreign Affairs, Defence, Currency and Communications were supposed to be matters reserved to a common federal Government. Details of this pre-constitutional arrangement were left to be worked out, under the responsibility of the leaders of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, by the future freely elected Parliament of Czecho-Slovakia.

As President, T. G. Masaryk ignored the commitments taken over with respect to Slovakia. A highly centralized Government was arbitrarily set up in Prague by methods which were a mockery of a parliamentary procedure. The self-appointed Revolutionary Government had selected, without elections a Revolutionary Assembly of 270 members, of whom 229 were Czechs and 41 Slovaks. This body then confirmed that self-appointed Government in office, and on February 29, 1920 adopted a unitary Constitution proposed by that Government. In that fundamental law of the new State the very name of Slovakia disappeared since the **Czecho-Slovakia** of the Paris Peace Treaties was replaced by a linguistic barbarism, i e., **Czechoslovakia**.

Consequently, in the period to follow, Slovakia's political destinies had not been shaped by the Slovak people, but by the Czech majority of the Prague Parliament. Moreover, in pursuit of a "Great Czechia" dream, the Prague Government had, before 1938, practiced denationalization and a carefully planned genocide on the Slovak nation through its persistent effort at cultural and linguistic assimilation thereof, and an outright persecution of the Slovaks for their national feelings. Since during all that period the Czechs had rejected either a federative reform of the State, or an autonomous status for Slovakia, the Slovaks did not see another alternative than to proclaim, on March 14, 1939, the Slovak Republic.

With respect to economy, Slovakia was down graded to an agricultural **hinterland** for the Czech lands, a provider of cheap raw materials and cheap labor for the Czech monopolistic industry.

Regardless of what Czech and Communist historians might have affirmed after World War II, the Slovak Republic was not abandoned by a decision of the Slovak people; it was occupied and suppressed by the Soviet Army as a consequence of the Benes-Stalin Agreement of December 12, 1943.

After the restoration of Czecho-Slovakia in 1945, hundreds of thousands of Slovakia's inhabitants were resettled in the Sudetenland of Bohemia. There, they were exposed in the name of the international solidarity of the proletariat, to the same denationalization policy as they had been before 1938 in the name of an artificial "Czechoslovak" nation.

The integration of Czecho-Slovakia into the Soviet bloc as a consequence of the Treaty concluded in 1943 by E. Beneš and J. V. Stalin, proved to be a tragic mistake. The present occupation of Czecho-Slovakia by the Soviet Union is to a great extent the result of that fatal move. For much as we condemn this brutal Soviet intervention, the primary responsibility for it rests upon the shoulders of those who had sold out Czecho-Slovakia's sovereignty to that Eurasiatic power.

Since the Czech leadership has failed in the past to secure Czecho-Slovakia first from an aggressive policy of Germany, then from that of the Soviet Union, the Slovak Liberation Council believes that the Czech statesmanship has lost its credit and Czecho-Slovakia its *raison d'être*.

The Slovak Liberation Council follows with increased attention the present developments in Czecho-Slovakia and Slovakia's effort for self-expression, self-government and identity. It takes a positive attitude toward this natural trend. Yet, it is convinced that the federalization of Czecho-Slovakia comes fifty years too late.

Taking into consideration all what precedes, we reaffirm our hopes for a better future of Slovakia in the following points:

1. The Slovaks are, in Central Europe, an ethnic unit that has all the attributes Political Science considers as constitutive of a nation: their own history, their territory, their language and culture, their sociological and ethnographic individuality.

2. After many decades of self-frustration, first within the Kingdom of Hungary, then in Czecho-Slovakia, the Slovaks are not any more willing to live in the indignity of being ruled from outside, of being politically, economically, and culturally exploited by their neighbors. In this period of decolonization in Africa and Asia, of tribal and island states, they, too, aspire to become a sovereign political unit, i.e., to exercise their right to self-determination. This right has been recognized to every nation in the Charter of the United Nations, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 as well as in the subsequent Pacts of the United Nations on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. Consequently, they feel entitled to their own statehood and their own democratic institutions.

3. In this International Year of Human Rights, we believe that the future existence of Slovakia can properly be secured only in a closer European Federation, or—until this becomes a reality—in a free partnership of Central-European nations, partnership, based on the principles of equality.

Dr. Ferdinand Durčanský,
President, Executive Committee

Dr. J. M. Kirschbaum,
President, The Assembly

RESOLUTION

We, Slovak Americans, representing the overwhelming majority of organized Americans of Slovak descent and joining with representatives of Slovak organizations of Canada and Western Europe, gathered at the Americana Hotel in New York City, the home of the United Nations, on this 27th day of October, 1968, solemnly resolve:

1 Our cultural and civic aspirations are the very same aspirations as those of the American people—

2 Our eleven hundred year old Christian tradition will continue to inspire and hopefully insure the free and democratic future of our kin and brethren of sad and occupied Slovakia—

3 As we support our federal, state and municipal authorities, we seek the support of these same sources of power to obtain for Slovakia the freedom we are so fortunate to enjoy here in our beloved United States—

4 With confidence in the strength of a just and peaceful world, we solicit the support—moral, intellectual, civic and governmental—of all peace loving peoples in our protests against the treacherous oppression of the Slovak people by the brutal Soviet occupation—

5 We commend to the United Nations organization the cause of basic Human Rights for the Slovak nation on this 20th anniversary of the laudable Declaration of Human Rights which that world organization enacted in 1948—

6 We believe that eventual free elections in Slovakia will best express the will of the Slovak people and confidently believe that the Slovak nation will best decide her future—for her own best interest—as an independent nation—if only given the opportunity to do so.

7 Finally, we wish these sentiments to be made widely-known and hereby authorize the distribution of this resolution to be made to local, state, national and international authorities everywhere.

Accepted unanimously by the attending members of this historic Manifestation of the Slovak organizations meeting under the auspices of The Slovak League of America.

Edward J. Behuncik, President
Joseph Pauco, Secretary

AS OTHERS SEE IT

Dear Fellow Americans of Slovak Descent:

I have followed the recent suppression of the Slovak and Czech peoples by the Soviet-led invasion with great sadness. During a tragically brief period of social reform, the peoples of this small but gallant country were able to assert themselves and to proceed with the selection of their own leaders and their own path of government. These natural aspirations, common to men everywhere, have been cruelly dashed under the heavy boot of the Soviet Union.

As you reflect this evening in the triumphs and tragedies that have befallen the Slovak people you will also realize that all America, and all free men throughout the world, share your pride, your concern and your indignation. It is a bold testimony to freedom that the spirit of the Slovak people, with whom you share a common heritage, cannot be crushed by tank or by edict.

My message is not only to the two million Slovak people who are citizens of the United States. My message is to all the Slovak people everywhere, a people who for more than 1,000 years have never hesitated to stand up to the aggressor. I pledge to you that the Nixon Administration will be dedicated to peace. Peace at home. And peace abroad. In our intensely practical pursuit of the vision of freedom we will strive for a strong new America. An America which will flourish in the sun of a true prosperity, rather than stumble in the dark of inflation. An America which will reaffirm

the rights of all citizens as set forth in the Constitution, and as guaranteed under the order and justice of law.

The Challenges are enormous but they are not impossible. With your support we can translate our ideals into living reality. I pledge myself to these ends.

With very best wishes,

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

New York, October 27, 1968

It gives me great pleasure to address myself to you Americans of Slovak descent. Within the borders of these United States your number is close to two million. Your culture and traditions proudly fostered in Slovakia and brought to this new land, and seeded, have become part of our American heritage. Your appreciation and love of America is exemplified by your sense of dedication and patriotism dating to the United States' fight for independence. The very same independence and freedom so fervently sought in Slovakia.

No other nation of immigrants purports to be so humble and at the same time aggravates in America's conscience a love of God, country and home. It is therefore of little wonder that your mother country of Slovakia has in the past 1000 years never waned from her fight for selfdetermination... regardless of the strength of the oppressor... or the toll to be paid. This struggle is particularly courageous considering the victo-

ries attained were few and short-lived. If it is of any consolation, Slovakia and her people have been victorious in winning the respect of free men the world over. The time is now for these free men and nations to help others in attaining the same.

I have already expressed this position publicly when I said that "We wish every people to be free to determine for itself its own form of Government."

America and its leaders must recognize the existence of Slovakia as a nation of four and one half million people with their own language and culture. — *Message from Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller*, delivered June 28, 1968.

Dear Mr. E. J. Behuncik:

Please accept and extend to your associates and members my personal as well as official greetings at your manifestation.

All Connecticut is appreciative of the great contributions made by the Slovak immigrants as well as Slovak Americans to the betterment of the civic, educational, cultural, economic and spiritual life in all parts of our great State.

We are all hopeful that the current tragic era will soon pass and that Slovakia will be able to take her rightful place in the international family of peaceful nations.

In the meantime please know that we would welcome to Connecticut all escapees from Slovakia who care to come to us just as we welcomed the Hungarian, Ukrainian, Polish and other God fearing, peace loving escapees from Soviet brutality and aggression.

I am confident your manifestation will be another landmark in

the long Christian tradition of the Slovaks.

To you personally, my congratulations on the high honor Slovak Americans have bestowed on one of Connecticut's Sons — *Sincerely John Dempsey, Governor of Connecticut, October 25, 1968*

Despite the language of the Pittsburgh Pact, and despite the hopes of the Slovak people for national autonomy within a federative framework, the Slovaks have had to struggle within Czecho-Slovakia for their national freedom. This struggle finally led to the secession of Slovakia from Czecho-Slovakia in 1939 and the formation of an independent state of Slovakia until 1945, when Slovakia returned to Czecho-Slovak government.

The struggle of the Slovaks for full recognition has definitely contributed to the new liberal climate of the country. In a recent article in the U. S. Information Agency's journal, Problems of Communism, the editor made this observation:

The Slovaks have long considered themselves the disfranchised of the two major ethnic groups that comprise this small Central European country, and their struggle against the oppressive practices of the government in Prague, first inspired by specifically national grievances, has over the years become both the symbol and the substance of the overall struggle against the authoritarianism of the Novotný regime.

The editor concludes that Slovak nationalism is "a force that more than any other has contributed to the spectacular debacle of Czecho-slovak Stalinism." — *Senator Richard S. Schweiker, Congressional Record, May 20, 1968.*

Dear Citizens of Slovak Descent:

As Mayor of The City of New York, I am honored to extend greeting to the Slovak League as well as all Slovak Americans.

Your forebearers who settled here more than 80 years ago have contributed notably to the culture and economy of this City and nation. Your contributions are more than a page in this City's history.

You must obviously be proud of these accomplishments as well as the heroic stand of your brothers in Slovakia who with only knuckles and spirit resisted the steel of Soviet tanks. However, tyranny cannot contain the Slovak's strong desire for freedom and self-determination. As you are proud of this spirit, so I, John Lindsay, am proud to be your Mayor. — *John V. Lindsay, Mayor, October 25, 1968.*

It is in Slovakia—the autonomy-minded eastern region of the country—that the Russians and their allies are encountering the greatest resistance to the occupation.

The Moscow radio charged last week that Soviet soldiers were being fired upon in Slovakia.

Bratislava newspapers reported that the Soviet Union was violating the Moscow agreement's clause on non-interference in internal affairs by arresting Slovaks. Prague also complained to the Soviet authorities last week over incidents in Slovakia involving Hungarian occupation troops. — *The New York Times, September 4, 1968.*

"Why do Paris and Prague have their beautiful architecture?" the Slovak asked rhetorically, then answered his question. "Because of us. Because of our mountains. We stopped all the invaders here."

He ran through an impressive list of tribes and nations that would have overrun the West but for the Slovaks and their fellow fighters in an arc ranging vaguely and variously from southern Poland down to Montenegro.

He continued: "And in our times of greatest cruelty we had our most lyrical poetry."

The Slovaks, with their national hero Jánošík, the mountain Robin Hood, are romantics and proud of it. They contrast themselves with the more stolid Czechs at every possible opportunity.

It was this romanticism, combined with some historical peculiarities, that made the Slovaks the leaders in Czecho-Slovakia's liberalization that began in 1962-1963.

Several leading Slovak Communists had been condemned as "bourgeois nationalists" in the 1950's and imprisoned or executed. Those condemned were some of the most humane of any of the Communist leaders—including Vladimír Clementis, one of the intellectuals who founded the Slovak DAV nationalist and artistic movement in the 1920's—a Communist who did not hesitate to denounce the Stalin-Hitler pact and the Soviet invasion of Finland.

Those who ran the Slovak party thereafter were a different breed altogether; crude, ruthless, and — perhaps the greatest sin in the eyes of the intensely nationalistic Slovaks — servile to Prague.

In 1962, then, the Slovaks began a campaign, first in party commissions, and later in public journals, to secure the rehabilitation of the wronged Slovak leaders, and retribution for those guilty of the purges.

Middle-level Slovak party officials and Slovak Communist intellectuals, working closely at this

point, did succeed in getting partial rehabilitations. Even more important politically, they maneuvered party chief Antonín Novotný into dropping two of the chief villains of the piece, Slovak party first secretary Karel Bacílek and Czechoslovak Premier Viliam Široký.

If subsequent changes did not go anywhere near as far as many of the Slovak intellectuals hoped, still the resultant party shuffle put men in control of the Slovak party (including that newcomer as Slovak party first secretary, Alexander Dubček) who would pursue Slovak interests rather than simply carry out Mr. Novotný's orders.

By 1964, with Slovak party officials satisfied with the personnel changes for the time being and not eager to upset a system they were benefitting from, the Slovak intellectuals suddenly found themselves without the support of these officials, in their further bids for reform. Being Slovak romantics, however, they pushed ahead with more daring than their Czech colleagues, and the weekly of the Slovak Writers' Union, *Kultúrne Život*, became the leading forum for progressives from the whole country.

And the Slovaks did remain united on such issue as seeking revision in the historical interpretation of the 19th-century father of Slovak nationalism, Ľudovít Štúr.

If this issue did not directly promote reform, it at least kept Slovak agitation alive. And the whole nationalist movement emboldened the Slovaks, politicians included, to press in 1966 for constitutional changes that would give the Slovaks more autonomy from Prague.

Economic issues between Slovaks

and Czechs grew more acute in the mid-1960's as well.

Under Communist rule Prague had poured investments into the industrial development of Slovakia, but these diminished as the first crash programs ended and particularly as economic reform introduced greater rationality in investments as in other spheres in 1967. This meant that the Slovaks no longer had the same economic incentive to fall in with Prague's directives on other matters.

The final grievance of the Slovaks against Prague—and it was far from a minor one—was Mr. Novotný himself. He had been a high party official when the Slovak leaders had been purged and had later put every stumbling block in the way of their final rehabilitation. Moreover, he made no attempt to mask his dislike of the Slovaks, and on occasion went out of his way to insult them.

All of these issues worked together to keep the Slovaks in the lead in demanding changes in the old Novotný system and, as Mr. Novotný's position eroded, a change in the leader himself. It was Mr. Dubček who precipitated the attack on Mr. Novotný last fall, and the solid Slovak opposition to the old leader was easily one of the most important forces in the anti-Novotný-coalition that finally deposed him.

That the Slovaks ended up in the vanguard of reform was ironic, for the Slovaks are the traditional conservatives of Czecho-Slovakia — *Elizabeth Pond, The Christian Science Monitor, September 24, 1968.*

Ten million Czechs and 4½ million Slovaks are twin nations now

with equal status and rights in a joint federal state.

The deed was finally done, after the promise of 50 years ago when the independent Czecho-Slovak republic was founded, by the signing Oct. 30, 1968 of the new constitutional law on federation. The law was adopted by the National Assembly a few days previously.

It was signed at a ceremony in Bratislava, the Slovak capital, by President Svoboda, on the anniversary of a meeting in a little Slovak village in the Carpathians in 1918.

At that meeting—in Turčiansky Svätý Martin—the Slovak leaders of the day proclaimed their attachment to a single Czecho-Slovak state and committed the “land of the Slovaks” as part of its common territory.

They did so after the promise of equality given by Tomáš Masaryk, who became the new republic's first President, to the Slovak community in America prior to his return to Prague in 1918.

Between the two world wars, however, “unification” was a half-hearted process which brought some gains to Slovakia, but felt it economically far behind the Czech lands and with a sense of inferiority as the “junior partner” dominated and ruled by the Czechs in Prague.

The first government program after World War II sought to put things right. Slovakia was given a substantial degree of autonomy under its own National Council and other local institutions.

But, after 1948, as the new Communist regime lapsed into the Stalinist “personal power” system under dictator Antonín Novotný, Slovak autonomy was quickly reduced, and finally abolished altogether.

Slovak protests and national feeling were condemned as “bourgeois nationalism”; and not only the economic neglect but the resentment aroused by the Prague leader's unconcealed hostility toward the Slovaks led to a crisis between the two nations which was a major contributory factor to the political shake-up brought about at the end of last year. — *Eric Bourne, The Christian Science Monitor, October 31, 1968.*

Mr. Husák has been one of the principal architects of the plan for a federalized state with semiautonomous local powers for the four million Slovaks and the ten million Czechs. Czecho-Slovakia is divided between the two ethnic and language groups much the way Belgium is between French-speaking Walloons and Dutch-speaking Flemings.

The Slovak leader was born in January, 1913, at Bratislava. During World War II he became a leading member of the underground Communist movement in Slovakia and fought with the Partisans against the Nazis. In 1944 he became a member of the Presidium of the Slovak party and its vice chairman.

In the immediate postwar years he was chairman of the Slovak Board of Commissioners, a position used until the Communist takeover of the country in 1948 to try to subvert the majority Democratic party. A year after the coup he was elected to the national party's Central Committee and later became head of the Slovak office for church affairs.

In 1950 began his slow decline as Stalinism tightened its grip. He lost his party posts and was accused of being a bourgeois nation-

alist. In 1954 he was brought to trial for alleged bourgeois offenses and for "antistate activities" and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Six years later he was released and in June 1963, his party membership was restored. While awaiting complete rehabilitation, which came in December, 1963, he wrote a history of the Slovak uprising during the war.

When Mr. Dubček replaced Mr. Novotný, Mr. Husák was one of the first to call for complete democratization.

Since January, 1968 he has been seen occasionally by Western newsmen at press conferences. Those who have watched him say he has shown a logical mind and has demonstrated an impressive mastery of his subject.

A conservative Slovak patriot and intellectual, Mr. Husák is known for his toughness. "No one," he said recently, "can determine for another nation the political representatives of that nation."

A short, stout man with bushy, graying hair and small tight lips, his half-rimmed glasses give him the look of a severe teacher about ready to discipline his students. — *The New York Times*, September 5, 1968.

On the most immediate level, the Czechs and the Slovaks could not fail to rejoice at the withdrawal of scores of thousands of Warsaw Pact troops from their soil. But at the same time, by reminding them they are now committed by treaty to play host indefinitely to a sizable Russian occupation army, the sight of the departing units only served to impress upon the Czechs and Slovaks to the degree of their

new servitude to Moscow. And that realization was particularly poignant for the 4.4 million inhabitants of Slovakia (map) since it came at a moment when, ostensibly, they were about to acquire more independence than they have ever before enjoyed. After a tour of occupied Slovakia, Newsweek's Eastern European bureau chief Alan Tillier cabled the following report on the current mood in the smaller of the two states that make up the Czecho-Slovak Republic:

Shortly after the 'Red Army moved into Slovakia, Russian garrison commanders ordered the local citizens to remove all anti-Soviet graffiti from their walls. But on a side street of the sprawling Slovakian capital of Bratislava, a slogan somehow overlooked in the great clean-up still survives. Scrawled across a wall in bold, 4-foot letters is the admonition: "*Slováci, nedajte sa*" ("Slovaks, stand firm").

In the two months since the invasion, the Slovaks have done exactly that. Despite a long Slovak tradition of friendship toward Russia, local radio stations greeted the occupation with clarion calls for passive resistance—and their calls were heeded. Slovak newspapers editors continued to use the forbidden word "occupation" so consistently that some of them had to be fired at Russian insistence. And when one Soviet commander, resorting to diplomacy, challenged the local soccer team to a game, both the team and its supporters repeatedly refused to show up.

LOYAL: Most important of all, Gustav Husák, the tough, chain-smoking boss of the Slovakian Communist Party, has remained unflinchingly loyal to the regime of Alexander Dubček (who is himself a Slovak). And Husák's ex-

ample has been followed by his countrymen on every political level. One village leader, when asked by Soviet officers to point out the counter-revolutionaries among the 1,400 farmers and peasants in his area, could scarcely contain himself. "I told them," he recalls, "that there were none, that the country had progressed more in the past eight months under Dubček than in the last twenty years—and that we wanted them off our land."

In a sense, none of this was surprising, for resistance to foreign domination is deeply ingrained in the fabric of Slovakian life. A lovely land of rugged mountains and forests filled with deer, wild boar and partridge. Slovakia has been the pawn of stronger neighbors ever since it fell under Hungarian mastery in the tenth century. Even after World War I, when it joined the neighboring lands of Bohemia and Moravia-Silesia to form the Czecho-Slovak Republic, Slovakia, to a degree, simply changed one set of foreign rulers for another. Politically, the emotional Slovaks were treated as second-class citizens by the more phlegmatic—and more sophisticated—Czechs.

INSULTS: Up to the moment he was ousted from power in January, in fact, longtime Czech Communist boss Antonín Novotný was openly disdainful of the Slovaks. He denigrated their culture. He discriminated against them in staffing government ministries and overseas diplomatic posts. In private, his references to them were personally insulting. And economically, Novotný stinted when it came to investing in Slovakia—with the result that the predominantly agricultural area continued to lag far behind its industrialized neighbors.

Even after Novotný's ouster, moreover, this discriminatory state of affairs persisted. "We have a Slovak national council," one *aparatchik* told me, "but what can it do?" Then he answered his own question: "Determine the size of parks and issue hunting licences."

Now at last, however, the Slovaks are about to become more independent of Prague. — *Newsweek*, November 4, 1968.

When the Communists took power, Slovakia's national interests suffered even more.

The reason was the traditional weakness of the Communists in Slovakia, which is largely rural. Since they had no strong support, Slovak Communist leaders leaned more on Prague.

If they showed too much independence, the national Communist leadership stepped in quickly with charges of bourgeois nationalism. Dismissal, imprisonment and even execution was the result. — *Donald Shanor*, *Pittsburgh Press*, August 13, 1968.

The Slovaks consider themselves the first people in central Europe to have their own state. Federation with the Czechs came in 1918. Slovaks feel the Czechs have tried to dominate the nation ever since. — *Detroit Free Press*, Oct. 11, 1968.

The time: early evening. The place: a half-empty, dimly lit bar in the Slovakian capital of Bratislava. Enter a squad of young Russian soldiers, each with a burp gun slung over his shoulder. Within seconds, the warm hum of voices

fades away to stony silence. Nervously, the Russians invite everyone to "have a drink on us." Without a word, the natives stare at the ceiling. Furious at the snub, one of the intruders unslings his gun, levels it at the patrons and orders them to drink. The Slovaks hesitate. Then, one by one, they silently raise their glasses to their lips. Moments later, muttering angrily to each other about "ingratitude," the Russians stalk out of the bar.

Newsweek, October 7, 1968.

Despite efforts of the present liberal communist regime in Czecho-Slovakia to reverse some of the effects of the antireligious measures of the previous Stalinist-line officials, progress is slow in improving the lot of some 9,000 men and women Religious.

Reports received from Czecho-Slovakia state that some government officials are seeking to repair the injustices done to many Religious when their orders were dissolved in 1950 and they were forced into civilian occupations.

For the most part, these Religious are still forced to work as street car conductors, street cleaners, masons and public toilet cleaners. Many now are too old to do any work. In 1950, when their Religious houses were closed, many of them were jailed without trial or forced to do military service or labor as road builders and miners.

A few years ago nuns were pressed into caring for the aged and sick, but their wages are con-

siderably below those of others doing similar work, even though the Religious must also care for older members of their communities no longer able to engage in any gainful employment.

(NC News Service)

There is no end of the complaints of the quarrelsome and high-spirited Slovaks against the "power-hungry Schweiks" of Prague. The era of knuckling under is finished. No more can whispered curses be heard in the cafés of Bratislava and the wine cellars of Modra. For the last three years, at least, the papers have been printing these grievances openly. The best Slovak writers save their choicest phrases for this purpose.

The major criticism is that centralist Prague deliberately and cruelly stripped the Slovakian Communists of power in two stages. First, in July 1948 when the Prague Party Presidium summarily ordered the dissolution of the separate Slovakian Communist Party organization. Second, in the early fifties when the Stalinist purge trials decimated Bratislava's Communist elite. The Foreign Minister, Vladimir Clementis, went to the gallows and the top Slovakian functionaries—Gustav Husák, the region's political leader, Laco Novomeský and Ladislav Holdoš, the poets—ended up in prison for years. Who bore responsibility for these juridical atrocities? None other than Comrade Novotný! — *ATLAS, Vol. 15, No. 5.*

* * *

THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA stands for honesty, intergrity, industry and justice in government.

BOOK REVIEWS

BOOKS ON SLOVAKIA

Reviewed by
J. M. KIRSCHBAUM

François D'Orcival, *Le Danube était noir—La cause de la Slovaquie indépendante — (The Danube Was Black—The Cause of the Independent Slovakia)*, Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1968, 304 p. maps, bibl.

Since 1917, when Prof. E. Denis of the Sorbonne wrote the first book in French on Slovaks, there were no French historians who would have shown an interest in Slovakia. Czechoslovakia or, in its original spelling, Czecho-Slovakia, was conceived and born in Paris and French intellectuals in the inter-war period adopted Czech views and fully supported Prague's policy. Since Slovakia was considered—on the insistence of Prague—an internal problem, French diplomats, historians and journalists treated or neglected it accordingly until 1939.

In that year France recognized the Slovak Republic, proclaimed on March 14, 1939, first de facto by appointing a consul general in Bratislava and later also de jure. Slovakia and Slovaks became better known in France and had not the Second World War erupted in the fall of 1939, there certainly would have been books on Slovaks and Slovakia by French authors.

The post-war period being again unfavourable to Slovaks under the Czech rule until last year, when Alexander Dubček caught the imagination of the West, the second

book by a French historian appeared only in 1968. The series in which this book was published is called "L'histoire contemporaine revue et corrigée" (Contemporary history—revised and corrected) and the contents prove that it is a revised and corrected version of what West-European historians and publicists published on Slovaks and Slovakia since 1945.

The author seems to be not only well informed, but he also looks with rare objectivity at the struggle of the Slovak people for justice and equality in Czecho-Slovakia and, when this proved futile, for self-government.

The book covers fifty years of Slovak history. It begins with the founding of Czecho-Slovakia, but it is the period of the Slovak Republic which the author analyzed in detail and put the events into right historical perspective. There are many valuable quotations data in this book. However, the author did not use the conventional historical method, indicating sources in footnotes or at the end of chapters, and therefore the book reads as a historical novel rather than a history book. While this method is not very much in use on the American continent, in France this kind of political literature has a long tradition.

The value of the book lies especially in the fact that the author was not afraid to interpret the struggle of the Slovak people for autonomy within Czecho-Slovakia and the years of the Slovak Republic without the usual bias common to specialists in Eastern Europe, who view the Slovak problem

through Czech eyes. The main events, like the "affair Tuka", the role of the Slovak Protestants, favoured by Czechs against the Catholic majority, the Proclamation of Slovakia's independence, the struggle of President Tiso with extremists and Germans, the communist uprising and the revenge of Czechs, communists and Slovak "Czechoslovaks" on Tiso and Slovak Catholics, are put in this book in a new light for Western readers.

Many quotations in the book indicate that the author is acquainted not only with diplomatic documents related to this period but also with Slovak newspapers and periodicals. He also seems to know the basic literature on Slovakia in English, listed in his bibliography. Those who read French will find this book a valuable source of information on Slovakia and a new look at the relations between the Czechs and Slovaks. The cause of Slovakia's independence found in the book for the first time an objective interpretation by a French writer.

Ladislav Mňačko, *Die siebente Nacht* — Erkenntnis und Anklage eines Kommunisten (The Seventh Night — Confession and Accusation of a Communist), Verlag Fritz Molden, (Wien-München-Zürich, 1968) p. 262.

The brutal occupation of the "most faithful satellite"—Czechoslovakia—by Moscow and her allies created the strongest reaction among writers, journalists and university students. The first two groups being a privileged class, were until 1963 more than loyal supporters of the Stalinist regime. In Slovakia, some of them even turned their pen against their best

friends and accused them of "bourgeois nationalism", but since 1963 they were in the forefront of the opposition and de-Stalinization movement. During the first 8 months of the liberalization movement, headed by Alexander Dubček, they led the struggle for freedom of speech, for a "human face of communism" and rehabilitation of those who suffered under Novotný's regime. In some instances they were dreaming and gave to their dreams of a free, happy socialist Slovakia a poetic, visionary expression.

The occupation destroyed during one night everything they believed in and dreamed about. The disillusion could not be more gloomy and many of them expressed it in verses or prose in periodicals like *Kultúrny život* and *Nové slovo* or in the daily press.

Ladislav Mňačko, who made a name for himself abroad by his *Belated Reports* and *The Taste of Power* in which he denounced the excesses of terror and injustice under Novotný's regime, expressed his disillusion, unhappiness and disappointment in this book. He fled from Bratislava to Vienna after spending seven nights under the Russian, Hungarian and Bulgarian occupation of Slovakia, and with fresh memories and in cruel disappointment he wrote his "confession and accusation".

The book is fascinating reading and an interesting document on the occupation of Bratislava, as well as on the crisis which the occupation created in the minds of Slovak communist intellectuals. Mňačko reviews night by night the whole period of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia, paints an interesting picture of the leading politicians and their behaviour, confesses his belief in and admiration for the Russians and Communism,

and with deep bitterness condemns the Russians, because they destroyed his life-dream.

Since Mňačko belonged not only to the privileged communist class, but was also one of the pundits of the regime, who had all doors open to the highest functionaries, his book has a highly documentary value. Many Western specialists in Eastern Europe will find in the book an answer to the question which did not seem clear to them or which they saw through the eyes of official propaganda or the writings of some Czech exiled politicians. Especially the persecution in Slovakia during Novotný's regime, the systematic elimination of Slovak educated people from various positions in the public life and economic and cultural downgrading of the Slovak people finds on many pages of this book a confirmation by an eyewitness, who remained communist in spite of everything that has happened to him.

The book deserves to be translated into English. In style and form it is a report rather than history, but its sincerity, first-hand knowledge of the occupation and of the leaders of today's Czechoslovakia make it an interesting document of our times and of the problems of Communism.

Lubomír Lipták, *Slovensko v 20. storočí* (Slovakia in the Twentieth Century). Vydavateľstvo politickej literatúry (Bratislava, 1968) 366 p.

Samo Falt'an, *Slovenská otázka v Československu* (The Slovak Question in Czechoslovakia), Vydavateľstvo politickej literatúry, (Bratislava, 1968), 352 p.

These two books by Slovak "Marxist" historians deal with Slo-

vakia in the twentieth century. This period also attracted historians in the West (R. Seton-Watson, C. A. Macartney and Taylor in England, G. L. Oddo and Kurt Glaser in the United States) and as a result we now have several interpretations of modern Slovak history. Needless to say that there are at least three different interpretations by Slovaks themselves:

- 1) the Slovak patriotic school
- 2) the Czecho-Slovak school and
- 3) the marxist school.

In English and other foreign languages, the first school is represented by the works of F. Hrušovský, J. A. Mikuš, J. M. Kirschbaum, Francis Vnuk, F. Ďurčanský, Š. Glejdura, etc.

The Czechoslovak interpretation can be found in Milan Hodža's book "Federation in Central Europe" and in J. Lettrich's "Modern History of Slovakia".

The Marxist interpretation is limited to Slovak and other Slavic publications except for a few articles or summaries in English or French.

Both books under review were written by the younger school of communist historians and published after the short "thaw" of last years. Therefore, in contents and language, they are quite different from books and publications produced right after the War and during the "cult of personality" period when according to Slovak marxist historians themselves:

"...the historiography was brought to the edge of isolation because of the extreme servility of some historians to the deformations of the fifties... and the historians were allowed to write until recently bloodless phrases... and shells without contents which could not satisfy anybody, but made many people angry and hu

miliated the whole nation..." (Nové slovo, Oct. 31, 1968).

Neither Lipták's nor Falt'an's book is completely free of bias and prejudice, especially towards the Hlinka's Populist Party, but in certain respects these two books shed more objective light on the Slovak struggle for freedom and equal status with the Czechs than for instance Lettrich's book and writings by the majority of Czech intellectuals in the free world.

Lipták showed some independence of judgment even before 1968 and published some studies on the period of the Slovak Republic which were close to objectivity. In his book, which also contains a six-page English summary, he views Slovak politics from "marxist position", but he avoided misrepresentations and foul language which the communist historians used when they wrote about the Hlinka's Slovak Populist Party and the period of the Slovak Republic.

The book is divided into five chapters: 1. Slovakia in Hungary; 2. Slovakia and the First World War; 3. Slovakia in Czechoslovakia—Gains and lost battles; 4. Slovakia and the Second World War; 5. On the threshold of the Present Times.

For Lipták "the period of the Slovak Republic is of great importance for the emancipation of Slovak politics and national movement not only for the necessity to build many national institutions... The political regime of the Slovak Republic was authoritative. It was a certain compromise between the ideal of the authoritarian corporative state advocated by the state president Dr. Jozef Tiso, a state built on the principles of the social doctrine of the catholic church and between the principles of "Slovak National Socialism" striving to

copy the German model supported by the so-called gardistic wing in the government, by fascist organizations of the German minority in Slovakia and by representatives of Germany. Originally in comparison with other dictatorships of that time and in that part of Europe rather "liberal", the regime of the Slovak Republic gradually became stricter by pressure from outside and by its own self-development.

As interesting as the chapter on the period of the Slovak Republic is Lipták's analysis of the period following the Second World War. No doubt, in interpreting the policies of the Hlinka's Slovak Populist Party and judging the regime of the Slovak Republic, Lipták is not free of prejudice and many of his interpretations and conclusions are far from being objective. His negative stand towards the period is of the same intensity as his positive and favourable stand towards the period 1945-1968, though he is at times critical and open-minded. He acknowledges that the access of the communists to power in February 1948 "had pernicious effects on Slovak autonomy". He also admits that one of the reasons for accepting the "Stalinist model" and for its "extraordinary hardness and long lasting" was "the combination of this totalitarian dictatorship with the attempt of the definite liquidation of the "Slovak question" in Czecho-Slovakia by political, physical, moral and ideal destruction of real and potential representatives of Slovak national and political thought. **This can be proved by many campaigns against Slovak "bourgeois nationalists", numerous pogroms against Slovak intellectuals, the falsification of national history, tradition etc."**

Lipták also deals with the terror

and trials in Slovakia and comes to the conclusion that "the so-called 'deformations' were not incidental but belonged to the system 'like voting to parliamentarism'."

He admits that "the power was gradually, but rather quickly concentrated from 'majority to the nation' into the hands of the communists and from them into the hands of a handful of governors dependent on a foreign, non-Slovak power and a whole hierarchy of their sub-ordinates."

The last chapter deals with the attempts of Slovak communists to change the system since 1963 and to give Communism a "human face." From a communist historian it is not a bad book on Slovakia.

Falt'an's book "The Slovak Question in Czechoslovakia" is focused on the Slovak problem in its ideological, economic and cultural context. Being a communist ideologist rather than a historian, he presents an analysis from the Communist point of view. Falt'an admits, as many younger Slovak communists did during the past few years, that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia did not have either a clear idea or a firm stand with regard to the Slovak problem. He condemns the Czech policy and ideology which attempted to deny to Slovaks their national and cultural identity and using all the power of the state tried to prove that Slovaks were but a part of a non-existent "Czechoslovak"—in the last analysis—of a Czech nation. On the other hand, he looks with the eyes of an orthodox communist on the Hlinka's Populist Party, which was involved in a fierce struggle against the "Czechoslovakist" ideology and discrimination with which Prague treated Slovakia between 1918-1938, but which was especially opposed to Communism.

Being opposed to both Slovak autonomism as presented by the Hlinka Party and the Czechoslovak parties supported by a small portion of Slovak intelligentsia, handsomely paid for their services, Falt'an uses all his marxist education in dialectics to prove that only Communist Party had the right approach and finally came with the right solution of the Slovak problem. The Hlinka's Populist Party achieved for Slovakia a federal autonomy in 1938 and for 6 years more independence and international recognition than Slovaks ever had in their long history. But the Communists were not in power and the statehood was achieved with the help of the German Reich and therefore for Falt'an this period was the "dark age" for the Slovak people. To accept help, even occupation, from Moscow, and to impose a regime of terror on the Slovak people which had nothing in common with their traditions, seems to be for Falt'an the right and the only progressive solution of the Slovak question. At the end of his book he condemns certain "errors and deformations" of the Communist Party, but the final impression of the book is that only the Communists have the medicine, and while German interference is to be condemned and those who were in power during the Slovak Republic were "traitors and collaborationists", Moscow's interference and those who obediently do what Moscow dictates, are the true Slovak patriots and representatives of the aspirations of the Slovak people.

It is this "leitmotiv" of Falt'an's book which makes it a partisan pamphlet rather than a historical essay. He undoubtedly is familiar with the intricacies of the Slovak question and puts the blame on

the right persons or political parties for not solving but aggravating the economic and cultural problems of Slovakia in the inter-war period, but his fanatic belief in Communism does not allow him to judge objectively the role of the Hlinka's Populist Party and even less the importance of the Slovak Republic. He condemns the Hlinka's Populist Party for achieving statehood for Slovakia in spite of his own statement that "statehood as an expression of national freedom nobody can reject and qualify as a treason on the nation" (p. 106). Czecho-Slovakia was founded with the help of France and restored by the armies of the Soviet Union, which imposed her system on Slovakia. This is apparently all right with Falt'an, but receiving help from Germany and adjusting to German pressure was an unforgettable crime.

Yet, even this book is more objective and written with less abusive language than previous writings of Slovak Communist historians (Današ, Kramer, Holotík) on this subject. Its value is also enhanced by a number of documents related to the Slovak problem in Czecho-Slovakia.

SLOVAK ALMANACS

1969 *Literárny Almanach Slovák v Amerike*, edited by Dr. Joseph Paučo, Ph.D., published by Slovák v Amerike weekly newspaper, Middletown, Pa. 17057, 190 pp. Text exclusively in Slovak Language.

Eight decades are spanned in the life of *Slovák v Amerike*, oldest Slovak newspaper in America,

since its first edition on December 21, 1889 in Plymouth, Pa. The late Konšto Čulen compiled a history of the periodical that first moved to Phoenixville, Pa, and then in 1891 to New York City. There it was published as a weekly, a daily, semi-weekly and semi-monthly at various times until it was purchased and moved to Chicago in 1951. In 1958 Philip A. Hrobák became the publisher in Middletown, Pa. and upon his death in 1964 Dr. Jozef Paučo, Ph.D. assumed its publication.

Dr. Andrej Kubina discusses the position of the Slovak language among Slavic tongues.

František Vnuk reviews the national economy of Slovakia under the communist regime from 1945 to 1964.

Dr. Imrich Kružliak, Ph.D. hails the centennial of his Alma Mater, the Gymnasium in Kláštor pod Znievom. He pays tribute to Dr. František Hrušovský, Ph.D. as an outstanding educator and historian. Dr. Hrušovský was director of the college from 1931 to 1945.

A Slovak dictionary dated 1648 was discovered by Msgr. Pöstényi of Slovakia, according to a feature article by Fr. B. Koltner, O.F.M.

Slovak folk art (in clay products, ceramics, glass, stone, metal, wicker basket weaving, wood, textiles, leather, embroidery, plastics, architecture, clothes) and Slovak folklore (songs, ballads, dances, plays, fables, legends, and proverbs) are reviewed by Milka Rechterisová.

Gorazd Zvonický's poems are featured. A memorable Memorandum of the Slovaks in exile is recalled by I. S. Kysucký. The declaration of September 23, 1946 in Arolzmünster, Austria, was addressed to the Slovak League in America with an appeal for finan-

cial aid and support to migrate to America.

F. Barčín's short play, Dr. Jozef Mistrik's article on Maritain's defense of the Faith, New Currents in Catholic theology by the Very Rev. T. J. Zúbek, O.F.M., S.T.D., Msgr. Rekem's article on the Glagolitic alphabet, Ján Okál's commentary on an address by Father Ján Lach, Marian Žiar's and A. Murin's poems, Slovak nationalism by Štefan Glejdura, Slovak culture at home and abroad by Dr. Jozef Kirschbaum, The American Spirit by Msgr. M. K. Mlynarovič, Pavol Hrtus Jurina's pair of short sketches, Short stories by G. Zvonický and Peter Klas, K. Strmeň's poem, M. Žiar's vignette from life, Ján Doránsky's observations from Expo 67 in Montreal, Sloboda's and Vetva's poems, a number of Dr. Dilong's anecdotes, poems by M. Gerdelán and J. Doránsky and a short story by Michael Gerdelán give us a collection of literary contributions that further enrich Slovak library. Many of them are gems of lasting value. The thumbnail biographical sketches of important personalities in Slovak world are undoubtedly of importance as data for future reference. Their value is enhanced in the light of the unfortunate failure in the past to record such invaluable information.

Appreciation of this and other annuals depends largely upon one's reading knowledge of the Slovak language, but a true scholar who wishes to capture the spirit and essence of the Slovak nation's genuine character must know the language well. Otherwise, he cannot fully understand his subject and therefore cannot hope to pursue his studies adequately, particularly in Slovak literature.—A. P.

Kalendár Jednota, 1969, Vol. 72.

Edited by Joseph C. Krajsa. Published by First Catholic Slovak Union (Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota), Cleveland, O., 232 pp., exclusively in Slovak language.

Dedication of the 72nd edition of the annual to Ján Sabol, the executive secretary of the *Jednota* for the past four decades, who bears the proud title (deservedly of 'Mr. *Jednota*') introduces a series of reminiscences by Msgr. M. K. Mlynarovič, a famous octogenarian in the Slovak world. Dr. Kirschbaum compares the Salzburg meeting of President Tiso and German representatives in 1940 with Dubček's fateful conference with Soviet bigwigs at Čierna nad Tisou last summer before the blitz invasion of Czecho-Slovakia.

Commemoration of the centennial of a historic Slovak college (Gymnasium) in Kláštor pod Znievom recalls the era of Magyar oppression of the Slovaks and cites the achievements of the venerable educational institution in Slovakia.

The papal encyclical, "Humanae Vitae" is explained by the Very Rev. T. J. Zúbek, O.F.M., S.T.D. Dr. Imrich Kružliak, Ph.D. notes the centennial of Bishop Štefan Moyses, great Slovak patriotic prelate of the 19th century.

Archbishop Eduard Nécsey, who died last summer after two decades of his troubled episcopate in Nitra, Slovakia, is eulogized by Dr. Pavol Beňuška. A number of poems by J. Dragoš-Alžbetínčan are scattered throughout the volume appropriately illustrated by photographs of leading Slovak personalities.

Contributions by Rev. Augustín Záž, Ján E. Bor, Rev. Jozef Figura, S.D.B., František Šujanský, I. S. Kysucký and Rev. Karol Nižňanský, S.D.B. deal with religious sub-

jects, the final days of World War II in Japan, Slovak Christmas customs, the varied experiences of Vajanský with gypsies in Slovakia, and Father Nižňanský's treatise on the ancient philosophies of India respectively.

Mother M. Emerencia Petrášek, SS.C.M. rates a tribute by Dr. Jozef Paučo, Ph.D. for her Slovak publications on the teaching of the Slovak language and her many articles that have appeared in our American Slovak newspapers and periodicals the past quarter of a century.

Msgr. John Rekem, S. T. D. of Winnipeg, Canada, praises the work of the Sisters of SS. Cyril and Methodius, Danville, Pa. for their contributions to Slovak liturgical singing in our churches and schools.

Rev. Štefan Senčík, S. J., S. T. D., of Galt, Ontario, Jozef Spetko and Peter Klas contribute stories on assorted subjects. A number of short poems by Marian Žiar are included. Msgr. Mlynarovič evaluates the work of the Slovak Catholic Federation (of which he was national president for many years) and visualizes its important work in the future as a dynamic American Slovak Society. Vincent Drobniak paints a word-picture depicting the history of the United States from 1776 to 1969.

The history (accompanied by pictures) of St. Martha's Slovak Catholic parish founded by Jednota members in Leechburg, Pa. 60 years ago is timely contribution of Vincent Cibik, one of the founders.

František Vnuk of Australia continues his prolific series of writings on Slovak political fortunes (and misfortunes) by hailing Dubček as 'a decent communist.'

Approximately 900 Slovak priests, the Slovak religious com-

munities of men and women are listed. The records are generally reliable but can stand revision. On the other hand, the listing of our Slovak professionals and businessmen is wholly inadequate and needs a complete overhauling. This require much correspondence but an assignment to this work will bring good results.

At the end of this annual the list of Slovak Catholic publications is up-to-date and correct in every detail. That they exist proves there are still thousands of our fellow Slovaks who consider writing and reading in the Slovak language vital to their interests in their family, social, religious and national life.

A. P.

Národný kalendár, 1969. Published by the Národný Slovenský Spolok, 516 Court Place, Pittsburgh, Pa. Edited by Ján Mihal, in the Slovak language, and the *Almanac* in English as a supplement, Vol. 77. The former on 121 pages and the later comprises 71 pages, including 22 pages of advertising.

Ján Pankuch, the president of the National Slovak Society, leads off the series of articles in the 1969 edition of the NSS "*Národný Kalendár*" by a review of events relating to the organization in the previous year. He includes his impressions of a visit to Slovakia in 1967. Among the highlights of his tour of the country were his visit to Štefánik's grave at Bradlo and the birthplace of Peter V. Rovniak (the founder of the National Slovak Society) in Dolný Hričov.

Ecumenism is the title of Dr. Peter P. Hletko's contribution. Albert Mamatey's World War I action in behalf of the Slovak nation's liberation from Magyar rule is

presented by Dr. V. E. Andic. The political testament of Dr. Milan Hodža is treated by Dr. Jozef M. Kirschbaum, Ph.D., LL.D. Rev. Andrej Rolík recalls his visit to Slovakia in 1938. Peter Klas adds a literary note by his short story, the founding of Slavia in central Florida is recorded by Karol Belohlávek, Miloš K. Mlynarovič contributes a short story and Rev. A. Rolík pays poetic tribute to him on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

Ján Pankuch, Sr. (December 16, 1869–February 28, 1952) is honored on the centennial of his birth by Karol Belohlávek's biographical sketch. An encyclopedia-dictionary in English on the Slovak nation, its language, history, literature, tradition, etc. is proposed by D. V. E. Andic.

Andrej Kalník challenges Dr. Bartek's views on the time of the first arrival of the Slovaks on the Danube.

Miloslav Slávik adds his short story. The first days of the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia pass in review as seen by Andrej Rolík.

A number of important centennials of Slovak patriots are listed, namely, Gejza Žebrácky, a historian, Dr. Albert Škarvan, M. D., Rev. Eduard Šándorfi, a journalist and biologist, Ferko Skyčák, Slovak member of diet in Budapest and co-founder of the Slovak People's Party, Dr. Jozef Janda, a canon and religious writer, Dr. A. Krchnak, M. D., active for many years in American Slovak circles, Rev. Štefan Ivičič, active in American Slovak life, Rev. Dr. Ľudovít Okáňnik, a canon and Slovak representative in the Hungarian diet in Budapest, Rev. Ján Malárik, Lutheran minister, an exponent of the One World State, Rev. Dr. Metod Bella, Lutheran pastor, Slovak

representative in Budapest and late in Prague, Michal Bosák, American Slovak banker, fraternal leader, philanthropist and publisher.

Peter Klas's short story, Debnárkin's tribute to General Štefánik on the current 50th anniversary of his tragic death, an article on Magyar revisionism, short stories by Slávik and Horský, Dr. Hletko's view on Štefánik's mysterious death as witnessed by eye-witnesses, a tribute to Bishop Štefan Moyses, founder of the Matica Slovenská, and Rozalia Gona's sketch on the gypsies and anecdotes complete an annual that is rich in content and a variety of subjects.

The English edition presents the highlights in the life of the National Slovak Society in 1968. An article on cancer by Dr. Peter P. Hletko, M. D., an assortment of brief articles, a short story, several features by Mary B. Burns, Dr. Stephen Hletko's tribute to the late Pete Latzo, onetime welterweight boxing champion, and a number of pages of advertising complete the 77th edition of the NSS kalendár and almanac.

Both the Slovak and English sections contain numerous pictures, photographs and illustrations that give an overall view of the activities of the organization's activities in addition to the valuable material on the Slovak nation's past, much of it by contemporaries. A. P.

Jednota Annual *FURDEK*, 1969, in English; Edited by Joseph C. Krajsa, and published by the First Catholic Slovak Union, 3289 East 55th St., Cleveland, Ohio 44127, Vol. VIII, 207 pp.

The 1969 Furdek edition features woman contributions: Sister M. Martina's composite picture of a

Slovak immigrant's early experiences, Maryagnes Krajsa's comparison of Andrej Hlinka, the orator, to Cicero, Sister M. Rosamund's history of Slovak drama and Sophia Zufa's short story. The Slovak nuns are members of the SS. Cyril and Methodius Community in Danville, Pa.

Dr. Michael Simko's short story, Dan Tanzone's tribute to the Jednota, a continuing series of the biographical sketches with pictures of a panel of Slovak clergy, Attorney Stephen's picture of typical Canadians, Dr. Jozef Kirschbaum's "Hlinka and the Pittsburgh Pact" and "Slovak Literature", Monsignor John Rekems "Glagolitic Script" article, and a brief study of postal stamps of the Slovak Republic complete a modest volume that is illustrated by a number of models wearing native Slovak dress, scenes from Slovakia and a photo panel of scholarship winners in 1968.

One more volume has been added to Slovak library. It is unpretentious but its contents give us additional knowledge of the Slovak nation, as well as a view of some of the activities among American Slovaks. Dr. Kirschbaum's article on Slovak literature is timely in view of his up-to-date listing of leading contemporary Slovak writers and poets.

Highlights from Slovak history (important dates) from prehistoric days to 1969 are valuable milestones in tracing the Slovak nation's history from the beginning of civilization to modern times.

The Furdek series is progressively becoming a rich source of material not only for the average reader but for students interested in pursuing their studies of the Slovaks in their homeland, or anywhere in the world.

A. P.

SLOVAKS IN CANADA

Joseph M. Kirschbaum *Slovaks in Canada*. Ontario, Canada, Canadian Ethnic Press Association, c1967, XV, 468 pp. Reviewed by Sister M. Yolanda Lederleitner, SS. C. M. and Sister M. Martina Tybor, SS. C. M.

A historical survey of Slovaks living anywhere outside their native Slovakia must of necessity follow a certain pattern of development. For the benefit of uninformed readers, the opening of the work must be expository—a delineation of the historic background of the Slovak people and their position within a historic perspective. Then there logically follows a record of their uprooting within the scope of the given consideration, as well as their trials and tribulations in a new environment, an evaluation of what forces worked for or against them, and an assessment of their achievements in the new land.

This may sound like a simple formula but it does not create an instant product. Only he who has set himself to the task of undertaking such a work can know the labor, the demands, the exhaustion, the research, the organization, and the judicious and artistic demands made upon the author.

In his book SLOVAKS IN CANADA, Dr. Joseph M. Kirschbaum has effectively met this challenge. It took years of personal interviewing, reading, and traveling as well as collecting, evaluating, and interpreting data just to provide the historical source materials that comprise the substance of this work. It had to be a labor of love or it never would have been achieved.

ed. The actual writing of the history was another assignment, one that is in a category of its own. It is a task that Dr. Kirschbaum has satisfied very successfully, for his book reads well. It shows a command of style characterized by clearness and an even tone of interest.

The publication itself was subsidized quite appropriately by the Centennial Commission within the centennial year of Canadian Confederation, 1967. It appears under the imprint of the Canadian Ethnic Press Association of Ontario. Canada can justifiably take pride in sponsoring this book, for it contributes an interesting and valuable unit to the aggregate history of Canada.

Exploring the book in logical order from beginning through middle and on to the end, one becomes fully informed not only about the history and life of the Slovak element in Canada but about the historical and cultural background of the Slovak nation as well. Such a succinct survey is essential to a proper appreciation of the Slovaks in Canada—or in any other part of the world to which they were driven by economic need, political oppression, or a multiplicity of other implacable forces.

Dr. Kirschbaum's summary of Slovak history is not expansive, for it is not the core of this book, nevertheless it is surprising how rich and informative is this first part, covering only forty-four pages. The scholarship of the author is well attested in his consideration of the ethnic origin of the Slovaks and their multi-faceted historic picture—cultural, political, religious and economic. And it is not superficially sketchy or a hurried exposition, as if it were the treatment of a subsidiary matter.

It is, rather, a balanced presentation of essential data, prepared by a skilled and able writer, a perceptive historian, an experienced teacher-lecturer.

Parts 2, 3, and 4 of *SLOVAKS IN CANADA* graphically and in interesting fashion traces the history of Slovak immigration to Canada, beginning with the earliest settlers who came to the Canadian West in 1880's not from continental Europe but rather from the United States, specifically from Pennsylvania, Montana, Ohio. It is of special interest to note that the first Slovaks came to Canada in response to solicitations which were made both in the U.S. and in central Europe to attract settlers since Canada's population increase was very unsatisfactory. The vast expanses of Canada had room for millions of people and the government took the initiative to attract new-comers to its land. In this respect, the coming of Slovaks to Canada differs from the coming of the Slovaks to U.S., for immigration to the U.S. was not generally by solicitation. Adverse pressures of various kinds lent support to the inducements of agents who tried to interest Slovaks to leave Austria Hungary in favor of Canada an unknown but promising new home.

Dr. Kirschbaum notes the flow of Slovak immigration to Canada in three general waves: 1) the years between 1885 and World War I—the pioneer stock, often an overflow from American quota restrictions or persons solicited by agents; 2) the post World War I interim (1921-1939)—young, sturdy, enterprising immigrants who came equipped with better formal education and a more vital political alertness; 3) the post World War II years—often political refugees, many of them from concen-

tration camps in Italy, Austria, Germany as well as asylum seeking political leaders and displaced persons.

Apparently Joseph Bellon who arrived in 1878 was the first Slovak settler in Canada. He established himself in Toronto and started a wirework factory there. But the larger clusters of Slovak immigrants did not gravitate to the Toronto area. It was the hard mining region of Canada's Western provinces with their bleak and monotonous expanses and unmercifully severe winters that became the history-making center of early Slovak life in Canada.

Naturally, the early immigrants arrived without benefit of luxury travel, without commodious motel accommodations, without ready investments from which to draw instant wealth. Although an aura of adventure and high romance colors most dreams of pioneering in virgin territory, the actual grubbing in deep recesses of nineteenth century anthracite mines was a matter for stark realism in their lives. Some were not able to withstand the cruelties of hard fate but others survived the difficulties and hoped for a better future. The later interests of these early settlers were extended to farming, dairying, railroad construction work and fruit growing. And each of these occupations had its own attendant trials associated with nature and the forces of nature in Canada.

It is understandable that the lives of these Slovak pioneers were committed to great physical hardships but it must not be overlooked that they were subjected to social and psychological burdens too. A man can strain and work to relieve material want but to attain acceptance and achieve at-home-ness among strangers, he is

dependent on more than his personal efforts and assets; to a certain extent, he is at the mercy of those others in his circle of social inter-relationship with whom he should form a veritable circlet of love and brotherhood.

But the encompassing of acceptance—or even of understanding and tolerance—was not the experience of most alien elements that came to help build a new country to its stature of greatness in economic and historic dimensions. Humiliation, ridicule, and the grossest of abuses—prejudice and exploitation—were the adverse elements against which most of the helpless minority groups had to steel their souls in order to survive in a new milieu that tended to demoralize newcomers rather than to encourage them and offer them a new life. Instead of being gun-whipped, as it were, by these forces, the strangers in a strange land had to prove the innate greatness that was in them; they had to rise superior to adversity and turn it into an instrument that would work to their good. Constancy and endurance made for increased strength; hurts and injustice borne without rancor or despair can teach men to be sympathetic in the face of suffering, to be just in the exercise of authority and power. Out of negative and destroying powers must be drawn positive good. The alternative would be defeat. The soul learns by enduring but, admittedly, it must be a great soul to endure profitably.

And so it was with the Slovaks in Canada. They were not insensitive people; they were endowed with simplicity of heart and inured to much suffering at the hands of hostile powers that had lorded over them in their homeland. They

did not demand the impossible; they did not deceive themselves with dreams of unreality. They mined, they broke prairie, gradually they established themselves, had their children schooled, organized benefit societies, built churches, bettered themselves—and in the course of years, they arrived.

The growth of beneficial and church organizations among Slovak immigrants in Canada comprises a history of its own merits, yet Dr. Kirschbaum does not slight or gloss over this subject. As a matter of fact, although cursory references are made to it in the first four parts of the book as the subject matter under consideration may require. Part 5 touches upon the sociological and psychological stimuli that often lead to organization and then points out how the very basic needs of the time made such organization imperative here. Within the space of less than fifty pages, the author surveys the social and beneficial organizations of various types that were initiated or developed by the Slovaks of Canada.

Religious organizations and the Slovak press in Canada are given some suitable consideration and discussion in the book though it is understandable that in a first book on the history of Slovaks in Canada, circumscribed to 468 pages, no area deserving of notice can be studied exhaustively. Some of the materials must be limited to basic data-gathering as an initial effort that may be researched and studied in depth in subsequent work. Yet let it be made clear that this observation in no way detracts from the merits of Dr. Kirschbaum's deserving book.

The unit of study on political refugees presents a documentation of Slovak history within the post-

Munich Agreement years that is sometimes distorted or bungled by inept writers or uninformed reporters of historic matter. Of course, within the scope of this work, emphasis must properly lean toward Canada's attitudes toward and opportunities open to persons displaced from Slovakia seeking asylum and new life after the catastrophic upheavals of Communist take-over in Czecho-Slovakia.

The logical development of historic topics presented by Dr. Kirschbaum leads to some insights into the integration of Slovaks into Canadian life and an evaluation of their cultural and scientific contribution to the country that permitted them to find new hope and new homes.

Part 9 is a French resumé of the book and forms a valuable addition inasmuch as it makes some of the information accessible to foreign researchers for whom English may be a handicap and inasmuch as interested Canadians who favor French may find in this section an account that will help them to appreciate their fellow-citizens of Slovak background who also contribute some of the glory of the great Canadian mosaic among nations of a free world.

Of signal historic value are the twenty-four documents that follow the body of Dr. Kirschbaum's book. Further enrichment is also provided by the lengthy bibliography and the indispensable index of names and of subjects.

We who are privileged to look upon the accomplished fact of a finished project presenting to the public the aches and the trials, the hopes and the promises, the opportunities and the fulfillment up to triumph, the gifts received and the gifts given, the moral as well as the material investments made

and the dividends garnered—we are grateful to Dr. Kirschbaum whose scholarly initiative and acumen together with his indefatigable industry and talent has made this book a reality. It deserves more than one reading since it is an informative and highly interesting account of Slovak life in a new world setting.

In all honesty, we must admit an undenied regret that the Slovaks in the U. S. have not produced a similar or parallel history of their own to match SLOVAKS IN CANADA while at the same time we cherish a justifiable pride in Dr. Kirschbaum because he has done a good work well.

SLOVAKIA is published annually by the Slovak League of America, a cultural and civic federation of Americans of Slovak descent.

One of the purposes of SLOVAKIA is to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the Slovak nation and its long struggle for freedom and independence.

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